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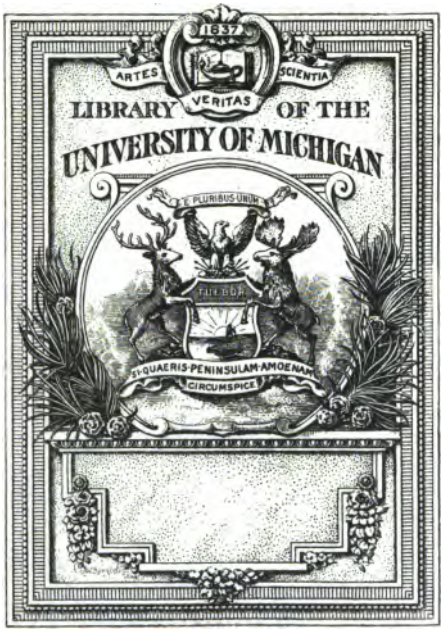
Wolfe

A.G. Bradley

English Men of Action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English Men of Action

WOLFE

JAMES WOLFE

From the Picture by SCHAAK in the National Portrait Gallery.

WOLFE

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A. G. BRADLEY

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CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS

HOUSES and localities whence great men have sprung are not usually backward in asserting their claims upon the notice of the world. Nor is the world, the educated portion of it at any rate, slow to recognise the additional interest such associations give to its wanderings, and the additional charm they lend to scenes or buildings that may even be otherwise good and pleasant to look upon.

And yet the quiet little Kentish town of Westerham has certainly succeeded in keeping almost entirely to itself the notable honour which unquestionably belongs to it,—namely, that of having produced the conqueror of Canada. It must not be assumed that Westerham itself has failed, within its own quiet and peaceful limits, to cherish the memory of its hero. But the British public in general, to whom Wolfe's immortal name and fame are so familiar, have most certainly never grasped the fact that he is so closely identified with this beautiful bit of the borderland of Kent and Surrey.

The reticence with which Westerham has worn its honours is the more curious, as the hand of time has dealt most tenderly with everything in the place that can

speak to us of the boyhood of the great soldier. The house in which he was born still stands conspicuous as the vicarage; the house in which he grew from infancy to boyhood still lifts its quaint gables but a stone's throw distant; while the church in which he was baptized looks down from its high knoll on both, but little altered save for some internal restoration and a graveyard richer by the tombstones and grassy mounds of half a dozen generations. On the farther side of the village, and immediately above it, rise the green slopes and stately groves of Squerryes, so indelibly associated with the pastimes and the friendships of Wolfe's early youth, and within which he deposited that bulky packet of faded letters which speaks to us so eloquently of the hopes and high ambitions that animated, the doubts that clouded, the principles that guided, his brief but glorious life.

Westerham lies upon the very fringe of Kent, at a point where several unnoticeable rivulets and springs unite to form the infant Darenth. About midway between Sevenoaks and Oxted, it is inside what may almost be called nowadays the outer circle of suburban London. On the east and west the main lines of railway have swept up to and beyond it. Being itself, however, upon a branch line, and that, too, a branch line of the South-Eastern, the builder has not yet laid his hand upon it to any noticeable extent. The old town is still entirely rural and unspoiled, and has probably altered little since the day when young Wolfe and his brother used to bowl their hoops along its single spacious street. Westerham is the centre of a region whose easily accessible beauties the Londoner, using the term in its widest sense, delights to explore. And yet it would be

interesting to know how many, if indeed any, of the thousands of holiday-making folk who flit in summer past the sunny, sleepy old-world looking town have the dimmest notion that they are treading on classic ground. A humble tavern, it is true, at the western outlet of the village, proclaims from its signboard that there, at any rate, the illustrious son of Westerham is not forgotten. At the other end of the town, too, the eye of the traveller approaching it from the Brasted and Sevenoaks road would, not long ago at any rate, have noticed the words "Quebec House" inscribed upon some railings on his right hand as he began to mount the hill on which the church and main street stand. Behind the railings he would get a glimpse of the flat stuccoed front of what appears at first sight to be a somewhat melancholy-looking modern villa. If he gave a thought to the matter at all, it might perhaps be to the seeming incongruity of the house and its title. In both respects, however, no verdict could be more entirely unjust. Behind the debased front of some Vandal of the nineteenth century there lurks a most admirable specimen of the smaller Elizabethan manor-house, while within its walls the conqueror of Quebec himself spent his infancy and early youth.

But with the exception of the unlovely modern face which obscures its true character, Quebec House has not been altered in any important particulars since the parents of James Wolfe went to live there nearly two centuries ago. Being, however, a good deal shut in both by foliage and other buildings, it consequently escapes the notice which, even apart from its historic association, it deserves to command. From the churchyard on

the hill above a good sight of the entire building can be obtained; and the view of its long array of tiled gables and mellow, red brick walls creates a strong desire to see something of the inside of so pleasing a specimen of Elizabethan architecture. All sorts of tenants have come and gone in the old house: for a time it was even a girls' school; but the interior still preserves its original character. Oak stairways, quaint nooks, mysterious cupboards, and spacious chimney-corners speak of a time long before the young Wolfes played hide-and-seek among them. Panelled walls and huge oaken rafters have long slept under thick layers of paper or whitewash, and suggest infinite possibilities for the hand of some reverent restorer.

It was in the year of Wolfe's birth, 1727, that his father, Colonel Wolfe, settled at Westerham. The Colonel, who was then over forty, had recently married a well-born young lady of twenty-four, Miss Thompson of Marsden in Yorkshire. For a short time the newly-married pair occupied the vicarage, moving almost immediately after the birth of their eldest son, James, into the old gabled house at the foot of the hill, which for some twelve years remained their home. It would be more correct, perhaps, to say that it was Mrs. Wolfe's home, for the Colonel was still on the active list, and being a smart officer, could have spent but a small portion of his time at Westerham with his wife and children,—for a second son, Edward, was born to them within a year of their removal to Quebec House.

The Wolfes had no local ties with Kent. The Colonel seems to have been born in the north of England, and the selection of Westerham as a home was probably

influenced by its convenient situation both in regard to the capital and to Portsmouth, and in some measure, perhaps, by the quiet and charm of its situation. The stock whence heroes spring must always have an interest apart from common-place genealogy. In a general sense there is no difficulty about this in Wolfe's case, for there can be no doubt that he belonged to a family of that name who settled in south-western Ireland some three centuries ago, and has now numerous representatives in the counties of Cork, Limerick, and Tipperary. The close connection maintained by Colonel Wolfe and his son throughout their lives with the Irish relatives establishes their origin beyond all doubt. It seems to have been, however, the Colonel's grandfather, one Captain Edward Wolfe, who returned and settled in England; of his son, the Colonel's father, no trace is left.

According to Irish authorities the hasty return of Edward Wolfe to the land of his ancestors was not entirely voluntary. He appears to have been an enthusiastic Nationalist and Papist, so much so that at the capitulation of Limerick he was excepted from the general amnesty, together with his brother, a Franciscan friar, and some other kindred spirits. The others were executed, but the Captain escaped, fled to England of all places, and turning Protestant, became a loyal subject and the progenitor of something more than loyal Britons.

All Colonel Wolfe's commissions, together with those of his son, are preserved at Squerryes Court. His first, as a second lieutenant of Marines, is dated 1700. Three years afterwards he appears as a captain in Temple's Regiment of Foot, and in 1708 was brigade-major of Marlborough's army in Flanders. This position for a

man of three-and-twenty, without social claims or interest at a time when both were of such vital consequence, stamps Colonel Wolfe as a soldier of much more than average merit. The Treaty of Utrecht, however, and the piping times of peace which for so long followed it, cut off all further opportunity for the purely professional soldier; and the elder Wolfe, after a brief period of activity in 1715 with Wade in the Highlands, retired into the ordinary routine work of a regimental officer in time of peace.

The long pacific administration of Walpole was one of unprecedented prosperity. It was also an age of rampant profligacy among the upper classes of society and gross coarseness among the lower. In quiet, well-bred country circles, such as Mrs. Wolfe moved in at Westerham, the evil tone of the times was probably little felt. That this lady was in every sense a most excellent mother is clear from the affection in which she was held by her sons, and the kind of men they grew to be under her influence. The high principle, the unaffected reverence for religion, the almost restless sense of duty, which made James Wolfe such a contrast to most soldiers of his day, owed much, no doubt, to the training of the gentle, dark-haired lady whose portrait now hangs in the gallery at Squerryes Court. Both boys were delicate and of a sensitive disposition, and on this account, perhaps, more keenly alive to lasting influences of such a kind than the sturdy pickles who from infancy break windows and rob orchards. James, however, had plenty of spirit, and the same sensitive and impressionable nature that absorbed so much that was good from his mother caught fire, at the same time, from the warlike reminiscences of

a father who had fought under Marlborough and Eugene. It was natural enough, in those days when people depended wholly on their neighbours for society, that the Wolfe family should form an intimacy with the owners of Squerryes Court. Young George Warde, the son of the house, was a year or two older than James Wolfe. Both were destined for the army, and a fast friendship sprung up between them which lasted through life; and to this intimacy is due the fact of Squerryes Court being to-day the treasure-house of Wolfe's literary remains. None of the wonderful instances of infantile precocity that are wont to distinguish the annals of famous men survive, so far as we know, in the case of Wolfe. He and his brother went regularly to school with one Mr. Laurence, whose house is still standing; but they did nothing, apparently, to cause that humble and forgotten pedagogue to break out into prophecy concerning their future. The boys spent much of their time at Squerryes with young Warde, and we know that James Wolfe, from his very infancy, burned with the military ardour which in after years developed into that passion for arms which seemed to many even of his military friends to border on fanaticism. Edward the younger was a less vigorous character. Deeply attached to his elder brother, he appears to have leaned upon him entirely, and to have followed him in all things, even to the wars on the Continent, where he found an early grave. It is no very extravagant exercise of the fancy to picture the three boys rehearsing in mimic combat on the green terraces and bosky knolls of Squerryes those famous battles of the future, in which all of them were to fight and two of them to fall.

About the year 1738 Colonel Wolfe gave up the house at Westerham and moved to Greenwich. This may have been in anticipation of war, or merely for the sake of his sons' education. At any rate the two boys attended there the school of the Rev. J. F. Swinden, a gentleman who not only secured the life-long affection and esteem of his famous pupil, but who was both a scholar and an excellent teacher. His school was popular among the local gentry. A sturdy urchin of six or seven, with maritime tastes already strenuously developed, was there spelling out his letters, while James Wolfe in the same room was struggling with his Greek and Latin verbs. The youngster was Jack Jervis, the future Lord St. Vincent.

In 1733 war had broken out over disputes concerning the Polish throne. The King, who cared nothing about domestic government, but imagined himself a second Henry the Fifth, was eager to fight. Queen Caroline, who managed him, was almost persuaded by her German sympathies to take his side and abandon her league of peace with Walpole. But the great minister stood firm, and the martial spirit of the King and the animal spirits of his prosperous subjects were for a time at any rate kept at bay.

A secret compact between France and Spain had long been suspected. The former was increasing her fleet; the latter was heaping restrictions on British commerce. The colleagues whom Walpole had one by one got rid of, and in getting rid of turned into enemies, shouted for war. The younger members of the Whig party, headed by William Pitt, joined in the rising chorus. The merchants, goaded to wrath by the commercial

discriminations of Spain, swelled the clamour; and on the 30th of October, 1739, amid the pealing of bells, the blaze of bonfires, and the shouting of the multitude, war was declared against the Spaniards. "They may ring their bells now," said Horace Walpole; "they will soon be wringing their hands." This remark, of course, implied no dread of Spain herself, but of the general conflagration which the movement was a year or so later to light in Europe. Englishmen in those days, however, had something approaching a conviction that twenty years of peace was a thing to be ashamed of. The late war, it must be remembered, had been Marlborough's; and yet, when the news arrived of Admiral Vernon's capture of Portobello, the country burst into raptures of exultation, as if such a performance were unprecedented in British history. And while it was still busy striking medals by thousands commemorative of the great event, and even making a national holiday of the victorious admiral's birthday, France, disputing England's right to land in South America, had joined in the fray. In the autumn Charles the Sixth died, and all Europe was in a blaze.

And all this time Master James Wolfe, studying his syntax and his mathematics at Dr. Swinden's, was no doubt in a fever of excitement, and longing for the time when he should exchange his pen for a sword and his class-room for a barrack. His father had just been appointed colonel of the first of six new regiments of Marines that had been lately raised, and the formation of a great camp at Blackheath brought the pomp and panoply of war into the very home of the two boys. Amid the universal applause of the nation great preparations

were carried on throughout the spring and summer for an attack on the Spanish power in America; and a large fleet assembled at Spithead for the support of the one already on the Spanish Main under Vernon.

Ten thousand troops were gathered in the Isle of Wight under Lord Cathcart in readiness for embarkation, and to this force, which was destined for the ill-starred expedition to Cartagena, Colonel Wolfe was appointed adjutant-general. James Wolfe had been no idler at school. His earliest letters show the good use he had made of his curtailed education, and the affection with which his master both then and always regarded him points to the same conclusion. But Latin grammar and vulgar fractions were no longer possible for such a boy, with the roll of drums and the blare of trumpets daily in his ears. He was just thirteen and a half, about the age when the fond mother of to-day would be debating whether her hopeful might be safely committed to the mild adventures of a public school. But James Wolfe had made up his mind that the time had come for him to be up and doing, and that his country had need of his services on the Spanish Main. It is impossible not to smile at the situation, but nothing could have been more serious than the attitude of Dr. Swinden's young scholar. Of course at such a tender age he could only go as a volunteer, and even then only as a member of his father's household. One can imagine his mother's horror and her protests. Indeed, we have evidence of them in the charming answer he wrote to her after his departure. That the lad should have succeeded in persuading his father to take him, we may accept as a tribute to the energy and force of will that distinguished

him through life. . Mrs. Wolfe could not realise the strength of the martial ardour that burned in the little fellow's breast, and upbraided him with want of love for her. This was probably an excusable fiction, a last expedient to divert him, if it were yet possible, from his resolve, for the relations of mother and son were through life of a most affectionate kind. The boy's answer is the first of his letters in the large collection at Squerryes. It is dated from the camp at Newport, Isle of Wight, August 6th, 1740. Here is a part of it:—"I am very sorry, dear mamma, that you doubt my love, which I am sure is as sincere as ever any son's was to his mother. . . . I will certainly write to you by every ship I meet, because I know it is my duty. Besides, if it was not, I would do it out of love with pleasure. But pray, dear mamma, if you love me do not give yourself up to fears for us. I hope, if it please God, we shall soon see one another, which will be the happiest day that ever I shall see."

The martial precocity, however, of the young James Wolfe was nipped in the bud, for while in camp he was taken so ill that all idea of his accompanying the expedition was abandoned, and he was sent home to his mother—and to school!

And a very fortunate thing for the future hero of Quebec this timely illness was. The ignominious failure of the expedition to Cartagena has been made familiar enough in the pages of *Roderick Random*, if on the scroll of history it has been obscured by the successes which followed elsewhere. It reacted in a curious way upon the destinies of the nation thirty years later, for George Washington's elder brother was with the army, as a

young gentleman-volunteer from Virginia, and there contracted the fatal illness which subsequently carried him off. His death resulted in the family estates passing to George, and making him comparatively early in life sufficiently wealthy to follow his own tastes and inclinations. If George Washington had remained a younger son it is most unlikely he would have been available in 1775 to have stepped into the chief command. He might have been anything and in any place, a pioneer on the frontier possibly, or more likely holding a commission in the English army; but the choice of the confederate colonies and ready to their hand for leader he almost certainly would not have been. And without George Washington the very struggle itself in which he triumphed seems an inconceivable thing. Colonel Wolfe, however, was made of tougher fibre than Laurence Washington. He passed unharmed through the luckless enterprise, was sent in charge of the sick and wounded to Cuba, and did not reach home again till the autumn of 1742.

In the meantime affairs had progressed with his son James. Two years more schooling and renewed health had brought him nearer to the goal of his ambition. Much of his holiday time was spent in visits to his friends at Squerryes, and it was there in the Christmas holidays of 1741-42 that his boyish hopes and aspirations were finally gratified. He was playing in the garden with his friend George Warde, when a package containing a commission to his father's regiment of Marines was put into his hands. In after years, when England was ringing with his fame and glorious death, the spot upon which he was standing at a moment of such significant import to himself and to his country seemed to his old

friends and companions of Squerryes the most fitting place to raise a loving tribute to his memory. At the extremity of a high terrace on the southern side of the house, grayer from the drip of the tall trees which overhang it than perhaps its age would warrant, stands a column surmounted by an urn. Around its base are inscribed the following lines :—

> Here first was Wolfe with martial ardour fired ;
> Here first with glory's brightest flame inspired ;
> This spot so sacred will for ever claim
> A proud alliance with its hero's name.

Wolfe, however, was not destined to join the gallant and ill-used arm of the service which his commission indicated; and it was as well, for a worse sailor never lived. The reason for this does not transpire—possibly a desire for immediate active service had something to do with it. At any rate an exchange was effected, for on the 27th of April, 1742, when the British army destined for foreign service against France was reviewed on Blackheath by George the Second, James Wolfe, a lanky stripling of fifteen, was carrying the colours of the Twelfth Regiment of Foot as they marched past the royal presence. Nor, we may be sure, did the gallant young fellow bear himself less proudly on account of the presence, among the spectators, of his mother, and his neighbours, and his old school-fellows from Greenwich.

That Wolfe was an ugly, or at least an extremely plain man is almost as well known as the fact that he was a hero. It may seem a little premature to allude to the matter at so early an age; but it is quite certain

that Wolfe at fifteen was as precocious in physical development as he was in mind and spirit. He grew ultimately to be considerably over six feet in height. His shoulders were narrow, his limbs long and awkward. His face, according to the usually accepted axioms of strength and beauty, was a match for his frame. A receding forehead and chin with a slightly turned up and pointed nose formed the obtuse angle, or "flap of an envelope," to which his profile has been so often likened. His complexion was by his own account colourless and muddy, his cheek-bones somewhat high and prominent, while to crown all, in both senses of the phrase, he had red hair of the most uncompromising shade.

And yet with all these physical imperfections there must have been something that made Wolfe look every inch a soldier. His mouth, in spite of the receding chin, looks a firm one. His blue eyes were bright and eager, and are said in moments of animation to have lit up and greatly transformed his otherwise homely face. His awkward figure must, in such a rigid soldier as he was, have acquired something of a martial air, while his red hair, it must be remembered, was usually concealed under the regulation wig of the period. Though the defects of his appearance are beyond doubt, there seems to be no evidence that they ever placed him at a discount. On the contrary, the few contemporary impressions of his social deportment that have come down to us make no allusion to any physical imperfections. One would infer from them that he was as pleasing as he was known to be brave. His amiability and brightness, his height and soldier's dress and up-

right carriage, no doubt, did much to obscure those details of form and feature which, taken by themselves, were certainly unprepossessing to a remarkable degree.[1]

From the parade ground at Blackheath Wolfe's regiment, usually known, after the custom of those days, by its colonel's name as Duroure's, marched straight to Deptford. There they embarked with the rest of the army for Ostend. But south-east winds kept the fleet rocking at the Nore for nearly a week, and the young soldier made his first acquaintance with the element he grew so to loathe under conditions that were equally trying to his health and to his patience.

[1] The portrait of Wolfe that was at this time painted for his mother now hangs at Squerryes Court. But it is a full face picture, and the peculiar characteristics of his physiognomy do not therefore show. A profile sketch done by his aide-de-camp, Captain Smith, a few days before the capture of Quebec, is still preserved. It bears every impress of accuracy, and fully endorses the structural peculiarities which were the basis for the many memorials in canvas and stone which were done of Wolfe after his death. The picture by Schaak, presented by the King of the Belgians to the National Portrait Gallery, has been selected for reproduction in this book, as probably the most characteristic extant. It was painted soon after death, while his features and colouring were still fresh in the memory of his friends. It is believed that Captain Smith's sketch (also in the National Portrait Gallery) was made use of by Schaak.

CHAPTER II

THE CAMPAIGN IN FLANDERS, 1742-45 (DETTINGEN)

WALPOLE had at last been driven by the disappearance of his majority to resign, and as Earl of Orford to take his seat among the peers. England stood alone in supporting the claims of Maria Theresa to the throne of Austria, and the corps of which Wolfe's regiment formed a part was the first demonstration by land in her favour, being intended for the occupation of her Flemish dominions. Nearly all Europe was ranged upon the other side. For once Frederick of Prussia and France were allies, while joined in arms with them were Spain and the Elector of Bavaria, whose claim to the duchy of Austria and the dominions attached to it was the ostensible cause of strife. England persuaded Maria Theresa to purchase peace with Frederick by the cession of Silesia to Prussia. Thus lightened by so much of the weight of opposition she had to meet, Austria was enabled to drive the French out of Bohemia before the end of 1742. In the meantime, one English fleet blockaded Cadiz, while another lay in the Bay of Naples, and forced Don Carlos by threats of bombarding his capital to a treaty of neutrality.

Walpole's restraining hand was no longer at the helm.

The ministry, inspired chiefly by Lord Carteret, was as aggressive in design as it was weak in action; and the King, of course, was more than sympathetic with its warlike aspirations. Whatever may have been the defects of George the Second, physical timidity was not one of them. He was only too eager, like another Edward with another Black Prince, to march at his son's side and at the head of his army to any part of Europe that gave him the chance.

But the game of war was a leisurely business in those days, and for the whole of that year young Wolfe's regiment with the rest of the English forces lay in Flanders. Their first march on foreign soil had been from Ostend to Bruges. No part of Europe, probably, has altered less than that fat plain of fenceless fields, with its long avenues of poplars, its wind-swept waterways, its gray church-towers and red-roofed cottages, lying behind the long, low ramparts of gleaming sand which for mile after mile defend the shores of Flanders from the surf of the North Sea. And on that first night of the campaign the chimes of the famous belfry rang their tireless changes over the raw brigades that were destined to leave such heaps of bones at Dettingen and Fontenoy, and to write those immortal names upon their banners. Ghent was the point upon which the English regiments were concentrating; and Ghent at that time was neither the busy, bustling place it now is, nor the splendid city it had been in medieval days. It was a station eminently calculated to try the patience of the British army, who, instead of marching almost immediately to the Rhine, as had been anticipated, was detained in the dull Flemish town for nearly

the whole winter. The inhabitants had no particular love for their Austrian rulers, and still less for their English allies. The turbulent spirit of the Flemish burghers, so long slumbering, was stirred into something like life again by the presence of a large body of alien troops. Tumults between the soldiers and the populace at length became so frequent, that the magistrates issued an order to the effect that whoever should offer an affront to the subjects of the King of England should be burned in the back, whipped, and turned out of the town.

Young Wolfe remained at Ghent with his regiment, impatient for an advance, but making the most of his time by acquiring the routine work of his profession. He made friends rapidly, both in the regiment and outside it, and had, moreover, in quarters with him his old comrade, George Warde of Squerryes, now a cornet in a regiment of dragoons. The Flemish aristocracy, as is their custom to this day, flocked during the winter from their castles and country seats to their sombre mansions in the provincial towns, and Ghent, we may be sure, was no emptier that season for the presence of the British and Austrian officers. The prejudice against foreigners, evinced so roughly by the proletariat, was certainly not shared by the higher classes. At any rate it was not shared by the ladies; for Wolfe, ever and always in the better sense of the word a ladies' man, found the latter "immensely civil," though his crude French, according to his own account, must have taxed both their understanding and their good nature. There was the play, too, which the young ensign attended frequently for the benefit of his French; and when he could snatch a quiet

half hour of solitude he played elementary exercises on the flute. All this was pleasant enough in its way. Still it was not what the ardent warrior of sixteen, who three years before had been so cruelly baulked of wetting his sword in Spanish blood, had come over to the Continent for, and he fretted mightily at the delay. His brother Edward was eager to join him. The father, who had now come home as Inspector-General of Marines, yielded to the boy's wishes, young and delicate though he was, and in due course succeeded in getting him a commission in his brother's regiment. Edward Wolfe was just fifteen, even more delicate than James, and though full of courage, deficient in the nervous vitality and fire that carried the latter through everything, let the result be what it might.

The allied army at last left Ghent for the Rhine; and the younger Wolfe joined his brother in February, soon after that march had commenced, which proved to be one of such extreme hardship and suffering to the English troops. In less than a week of continual tramping over wintry roads even James Wolfe found out that his spirit was greater than his strength. He never came into camp at night, he declares, without aching hips and knees, and found it expedient, more on his brother's account perhaps than his own, to buy a horse, which they rode alternately, while the infantry tramped on up to their knees in snow. The commissariat was, of course, wofully deficient, for England had been at peace in Europe for nearly thirty years. Four letters of Edward Wolfe's, written about this time, are preserved; and in one of these he tells us how useful, thanks to the excellent Dr. Swinden, their Latin was as a medium for

procuring what they wanted from the head-men of the villages where no French was spoken. One gathers that the other gentlemen of Colonel Duroure's regiment were at a disadvantage in this respect.

By the end of June they were in camp at Aschaffenburg, and close to the enemy. Lord Stair was in command of the English; the French were led by the Duc de Noailles. For the last forty miles of the march neither men nor officers had been able to procure anything but bread and water. The neighbouring country had been stripped so bare, that James Wolfe tells his father he can see no possibility of procuring food. He was now acting adjutant, and at first found great difficulty in enduring the physical fatigue of the work; be it remembered that he was but just sixteen. General Huske seems to have noticed him a good deal, and requested the brigade-major, Blakeney (the same man, probably, who afterwards held Stirling against Prince Charles), to give him all the assistance and instruction he could in his duties.

The two armies were but a mile apart, separated from each other by the river Main. Some slight skirmishing had already taken place, and the younger of the Wolfes, his brother reports with a sort of fatherly pride in a letter home, was actually the first of the two to be under fire.

But now the English camp was all astir. It was the last appearance in history of a British monarch at the head of his troops in war. The King had come with his son, the Duke of Cumberland, and his minister, Lord Carteret. He was eager to fight, and there was certainly little chance of his being disappointed. Lord

Stair and his Austrian colleague, Aremberg, were scarcely on speaking terms in the face of a superior French army ably led. The King at once, however, took the command, and assumed an attitude which is in fine contrast to the rest of his torpid reign. Horses were dying, and men weak from starvation. It looked for a moment as if the army must surrender. Upon the right of the Allies were high mountains; on their left was the river, and beyond the river were sixty thousand Frenchmen. They were in a trap; but there was one possible way out, and that lay straight in front of them through the village of Dettingen which intervened between the foot-hills and the river. Into this gap the French could throw their army with ease, but the brave old King determined to fight his way through.

There are letters from both the Wolfes to their parents describing the fight. The one from James is far the most full and graphic. It is dated four days later than his brother's, for the fatigue of acting as adjutant all through the battle and the day following it put him in the hands of the surgeon, who, it is needless to remark, bled him.

There are many scientific accounts of the battle of Dettingen, but the recorded experiences of even a lad who fought through it are not so readily available. Such things, too, though they may be slight and imperfect, have a value of their own, and in this case a special one, as the narrator is the hero of our story.

The army was drawn up, says the young adjutant to his father, in five lines, two of foot and three of horse, between a wood and the river Main; and Duroure's

regiment held the post of honour in the centre of the first line. The French had now thrown upwards of thirty thousand men across the river, while the Allies had somewhat more. Gramont, however, who commanded the former, made the fatal mistake of leaving a strong position at the village of Dettingen, and marching out from sheer bravado to meet his enemy in the open. James Wolfe does not allude to this blunder, but he says that at twelve the two armies moved towards one another, though the fighting did not actually commence till one. The cavalry of the French household, the famous Grey Musketeers, opened the ball by a charge on the British infantry. They rode up at full trot, with broadswords slung on their right wrists and a pistol in each hand. Firing these latter at the enemy, they then flung them at their heads, and fell on sword in hand. They broke through the Scotch Fusiliers, the regiment first attacked, but with such a loss of life that scarcely twenty, Wolfe thinks, escaped. Four or five of them, says he, actually broke through the second line, but were at once captured. "These unhappy men," the letter continues, "were of the first families of France. Nothing, I believe, could be more rash than their undertaking."

Then from his central position Wolfe saw the cavalry from both sides advance upon one another in full strength. He blames the Blues for firing their pistols instead of falling on with their swords, by which the young critic declares that with their heavier weight they would have beaten back the French. As it was, the conduct of the English cavalry, and of the Blues in particular, was in anything but keeping with the renown acquired by the

infantry in this famous battle, and was the subject of much wider and more bitter comment than young Wolfe's. They had never, it must be said for them, been in action before. Both they and their horses were raw, while the squadrons opposed to them were composed chiefly of veterans. The French cavalry, however, profited little by their advantage. For being carried away by it they forgot the serried ranks of the infantry behind, and only realised the fact too late when half their number were stretched by a tremendous flanking fire upon the ground. "The third and last attack," writes Wolfe, "was made by the foot on both sides. We advanced towards one another, our men in high spirits and very impatient for fighting, being elated with beating the French horse. The major and I, for we had neither colonel nor lieutenant-colonel, before they came near were employed in begging and ordering the men not to fire at too great a distance, but to keep it till the enemy should come near us—but to little purpose. The whole fired when they thought they could reach them, which had like to have ruined us. We did very little execution with it. So soon as the French saw we presented they all fell down, and when we had fired they got up and marched to us in tolerable good order, and gave us a brisk fire which put us into some disorder, and made us give way a little, particularly ours and two or three more regiments who were in the hottest of it. However, we soon rallied again and attacked them with great fury, which gained us a complete victory and forced the enemy to retire in great haste." As the French fled to the bridges over the river the cannon played on them with great effect;

but General Clayton, who had orders to pursue, was killed, and the opportune moment seems somehow or other to have been lost in consequence. There was pursuit of a sort, but it was too late to be effective. The slaughter, however, was sufficiently great, the enemy having already left about six thousand dead and wounded upon the field. "His Majesty," writes Wolfe, "was in the thick of the fight, and the Duke behaved as bravely as a man could do. He had a musket-shot through the calf of his leg. I had several times the honour of speaking with him just as the battle began, and was often afraid of his being dashed to pieces by the cannon-balls. He gave his orders with a great deal of calmness, and seemed quite unconcerned. The soldiers were in high delight to have him so near them. I sometimes thought I had lost poor Ned when I saw legs and heads beat off close by him. A horse I rode of the colonel's at the first attack was shot in one of the hinder legs, and threw me, so I was obliged to do the duty of an adjutant all that and the next day on foot in a pair of heavy boots." One hardly knows whether to wonder most at the condition of things which placed the responsibility of a regiment in the van of a great European battle in the hands of a boy of sixteen, or the matter-of-fact coolness and efficiency with which the gallant stripling performed his task. That he gave satisfaction is conclusively proved by his being regularly commissioned as adjutant immediately after the battle, and promoted to a lieutenancy.

The battle of Dettingen, though so nearly a tremendous disaster, decided the campaign. It saved the English army, disheartened the French, and by giving time to

other bodies of the Allies who were gathering at various points, forced the enemy to evacuate Germany.

The English army lay at Worms till the autumn, when they dispersed and went into winter quarters. Wolfe and his regiment were with the fifth division, and their destination was Ostend, where they arrived at the end of November. It was just about eighteen months since the young soldier had stepped on shore there from England in his brand-new uniform and all athirst for glory. With regard to his share of the latter he had certainly nothing to complain of; but he had a natural longing to see his parents, to fight the campaign over again with his father, who had just been made a brigadier, and to hear that veteran's experiences on the distant coasts of Spanish America and the West Indies.

It was tantalising to spend the whole dreary winter on the sand-banks of the Belgian coast, looking out over the watery horizon that hid the cliffs of his native country. But he was an important person in the regiment now, and no man in it could be so little spared. About his brother Edward, however, there was no such difficulty; and the little household, which had now been removed to Old Burlington Street, was gladdened by the presence of one of its sons at the Christmas board.

The adjutant wrote letters to his more fortunate brother, which showed that in spite of his dreary quarters he was at any rate able to keep up his spirits. He has had some experience now of what campaigning means with a British army after thirty years of peace, and has ordered in Ghent a cart and a good tent for his brother and himself pending the next season. That he was not unmindful of the fair sex, even before he donned

his red coat and made himself agreeable to the ladies of Ghent, is quite evident from this youthful banter. "Doubtless," he writes to his brother, "you love the company of the fair sex. If you should happen to go where Miss Seabourg is, pray don't fall in love with her—I can't give her up. Remember I am your rival. I'm also in some pain about Miss W——. Admire anywhere else and welcome, except the widow Bright. Miss Patterson is yours if you like her, and so is the little staring girl in the chapel with £20,000."

The whole of the following year, 1744, the British troops, now under General Wade, lay inactive in the Low Countries. The French under Saxe, with whom for a time was Louis in person, had returned in overwhelming force, and were taking town after town in Flanders. The Allies were numerically too weak to do more than protect the other provinces should the need arise. And even when counter movements of the Austrian armies on the Rhine did give them some opening, the international jealousies of their leaders paralysed all effective action. But the year was not a barren one at any rate for James Wolfe, as he got his captaincy, which in those days was a tolerably significant tribute to the abilities of a boy of seventeen, who had no interest of the kind that the dispensers of patronage took cognisance of. His new appointment caused a change of regiment, and he now found himself commanding a company in Barrel's, or the Fourth Regiment of Foot.

In the autumn a great blow fell on the Wolfe family in the death of Edward, who had just got his lieutenancy. The hardships of campaigning had been too much for his

frail constitution, and he died at Ghent of a rapid consumption. His brother, being now in a different regiment, was separated from him during his brief illness, and, through some miscarriage of letters, being unaware of the danger, had failed to reach Ghent in time to see the poor young fellow before he died. This was a grievous blow to James Wolfe. Months afterwards we find him almost resenting the effect upon his spirits of the healing hand of time, and reproaching himself with something like treachery to his dead brother in not being able to resist it.

The winter of 1744-45 Wolfe again spent in Ghent, and made fresh attempts to get leave to visit his parents. But all through his career he seems somehow or other to have been too useful a man to dispense with. The sense of justice was probably in such matters not very nicely balanced in those days; and so numerous were the privileged idlers, that a worker without backstair influence was all the more valuable. Wolfe, for such a man, had got his company in an extraordinarily short time; and there seems to have been a feeling that he had no business on that account to expect the favours granted as a matter of course to those who owed their rank to connections that were not always even reputable.

The campaign of 1745 on the Continent was an unprofitable one for England. Wolfe, with Barrel's regiment, remained inactive at Ghent, but his old corps shared in the glorious defeat of Fontenoy, and lost three hundred and eighteen officers and men in killed and wounded. Twice in his life Wolfe was just saved from inclusion in a great disaster. The first occasion was Fontenoy; the

second was the destruction of Braddock's army in the American forests ten years later.

At Dettingen, owing to the illness or absence of the senior officers, Wolfe's old regiment was commanded, it will be remembered, by a major; at Fontenoy it was led into action by a captain. This gentleman wrote to Wolfe immediately after the battle describing it, and the latter quotes several paragraphs of his correspondent's in a letter to his father from Ghent. One is accustomed to think of Fontenoy as a monument of unflinching endurance and discipline. It is a little surprising to find a responsible officer, who was in the thick of the action, qualifying his praise with hints of over-rashness and impetuosity on the part of the men.

Barrel's regiment soon after marched out of Ghent to take the place of one of those that had been decimated at Fontenoy. Ghent itself fell shortly afterwards into the hands of the French, and Ostend also surrendered. In the midst of all these rebuffs to the arms of the Allies, the British troops on the Continent were suddenly recalled to protect their native land against what was in some respects a more formidable foe, for on the 25th of July Charles Stuart had landed in the north. Depression and consternation reigned throughout England. At another time some elation might have been felt at the news that four thousand New England volunteers, backed by an English naval squadron, had captured Louisbourg from the French, and that the whole island of Cape Breton had surrendered to the British crown. The alarm in England, however, was much too great to be soothed or mitigated by triumphs that were certainly remote and seemed to be unimportant. For so

narrow at this time was the vision of English ministers, that Louisbourg was exchanged at the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle for a most paltry equivalent. It was in vain that a member of Parliament, a decade ahead of his generation, declared in excited hyperbole from his seat in the house, that if it came to giving up Portsmouth or Louisbourg to the French he for one would hesitate in a choice between two such evils. A few years later and Pitt had opened the eyes of England. Blood and treasure were freely lavished in rectifying the error; and in following the fortunes of Wolfe we shall see how sincere were the rejoicings throughout the country when he and Amherst marched their victorious battalions over the smoking ruins of "the Dunkirk of America."

CHAPTER III

THE REBELLION IN SCOTLAND, 1745
(FALKIRK—CULLODEN)

PRINCE CHARLES EDWARD landed on the west coast of Inverness-shire upon the 25th of July 1745, accompanied only by the Duke of Athole, an attainted rebel of 1715, and half a dozen adventurers, chiefly Irishmen. The rallying of the western clans to his standard, and the subsequent march upon and occupation of Edinburgh, is a picturesque and familiar episode in history with which this story has no direct concern. The Highland rebellion, however, had so much to do with determining the course of Wolfe's career that it will be not perhaps out of order to recall some of the salient points which distinguished it before Barrel's regiment, with the rest of the British army, appeared upon the scene.

It will be remembered with what persistent scepticism all the rumours of a fresh rising of the exiles had been received by the court and the country. The young Chevalier had been actually a fortnight in Scotland before it was known in Edinburgh that he had left France, and a great panic seized the country when the news by special messengers went flying southward. Poor Cope is chiefly remembered for the rout of Prestonpans, which was his misfortune and not his fault

As commander-in-chief of the troops in Scotland, he was prompt enough when his moment for action came, and it was said that had his advice been taken earlier in London much ruin and bloodshed might have been saved.

At any rate he was at Stirling with all the forces immediately available in Scotland, some fourteen hundred men, within a week of the 9th of August, the day on which the news of the Prince's landing was received in Edinburgh. His orders were to make at once for Fort Augustus; but owing to the lack of supplies he was unable to march before the 20th, and by that time the passes through which his road lay were manned by forces that could have in such positions defied an army three times the size of his. The road along the east coast was his only alternative; but as he was hurrying northward along it, the Prince, having slipped behind him with the fast gathering clansmen, was stealing southward to Edinburgh. Thus baffled, Cope and his soldiers, now increased to two thousand, took ship at Aberdeen, coasted southward along the shores of Forfar and Fife, and crossing the mouth of the Firth landed at Dunbar on the 18th of September, the day after the Jacobites had entered Edinburgh. Two days later was fought the famous battle of Prestonpans, which annihilated Cope's army and left Scotland at the feet of the Prince.

But troops were mustering fast now. The foreign legions had been recalled, the King had landed, and the Duke of Cumberland was already in London. General Wade lay in camp at Newcastle with ten thousand men. With him was Barrel's regiment and James Wolfe, who was now appointed brigade-major. There, too, was not only the regiment of Wolfe's father's, but that old soldier

himself in the capacity of general of division. Mrs. Wolfe at Burlington Street, poor lady, is in a sad plight, with her husband and her one remaining son,—all that is left to her—face to face with those terrible savages of whose ferocity all England is unjustly ringing. James Wolfe does his best to allay the not unnatural anxieties of his mother. His father, he declares, was never better, and drives about the camp in his post-chaise, enjoying himself greatly; while as for the rebels "it was commonly reported they wouldn't stand the King's troops." On this point, however, it is possible that Wolfe may have privately held other opinions.

For the next two months, while the rebel army, that is to say, was marching to Derby and back again to Scotland, Wolfe and his regiment lay inactive at Newcastle. Indeed, the apathy of Wade at this period is difficult to understand. An attempt was made, it is true, in the middle of November to reach Carlisle, while Charles was besieging it on his way south; but the weather was terrible, and the cold prematurely bitter. After two days of struggling with miry roads and adverse elements, the Marshal heard that the city had fallen, and returned to Newcastle. From thence, much marching and counter-marching took place to little purpose and within a limited area. Finally, the army, under a new commander, Hawley (Hangman Hawley), moved north to Edinburgh, and thence striking westward to meet the rebels on their backward march through Scotland, encamped on January 16th at Falkirk. It proved to be the eve, though the royal troops hardly expected such rapid work, of the second of the three pitched battles of the campaign.

The winter had been one of the worst on record in Scotland. Wolfe's duties as brigade-major were fatiguing and arduous. He had served under worse conditions, however, in the weary period preceding Dettingen; and he seems to have kept up his health pretty well all through the campaign. By this time he had lost the company of his father, as no mention appears of that veteran north of the border, either in the accounts of the campaign or in his son's correspondence, which was now, however, greatly curtailed by the absorbing nature of his duties.

The rebels were by this time at Stirling making vain attempts with their feeble artillery to reduce the castle, which was held by Blakeney, Wolfe's old instructor of the Flemish campaign. A few miles only separated the two armies, and an engagement was imminent; but Hawley was hardly prepared to see the Highland clans appearing on the hill-tops, not a mile from the town, on the day after his arrival.

Charles Edward had reviewed his army at ten o'clock that morning, the 17th, on the historic field of Bannockburn. By a forced march through bye-lanes and over ploughed fields, keeping always to the south of the main road between Stirling and Falkirk, he had cleverly managed in broad daylight to effect something like a surprise. His army had not yet begun appreciably to melt, and amounted in all to about eight thousand men. The Royalists, about the same in number, flew to arms at the sight of the enemy, formed rapidly in order of battle, and advanced with spirit to meet the wild array of mountain warriors who calmly awaited their approach. Hawley was breakfasting at Callander House,

and galloped on to the scene after the army was in motion, in breathless haste and, as tradition says, without his hat. He now formed the troops in two lines. Upon the left were the cavalry eleven hundred strong, while at the foot of the hill three regiments of infantry were stationed in reserve. Rarely has a battle been fought on such a dreadful day. A fierce gale, loaded with blinding sleet and rain, blew right in the teeth of the royal troops, and the gloom of a January afternoon was intensified by the darkness of the storm. Nor were these English soldiers the raw regiments that had fled at the first onset of the Highlanders at Prestonpans. Many of them had just returned from Flanders: some were the heroes of Dettingen and Fontenoy; but they had to meet an attack utterly unlike the orthodox onslaught of French or German troops. Wolfe and his regiment were face to face for the first time with men of whom they had spoken lightly, as became professional soldiers, but who were actually in the first shock far more terrible than any infantry in Europe. The cold, half-frozen rain beat more pitilessly than ever in their faces; they were drenched to the skin, and what was worse than all their powder also was rapidly getting wet. The steeple of Falkirk church, in spite of the storm, was crowded with spectators; and many are the stories handed down by the timid, anxious witnesses of this hurly-burly of smoke and darkness, steel and rain.

Hawley had not much of a reputation. He had, moreover, conceived a notion, drawn from some dim personal recollections of his own, that the clansmen would not stand against cavalry. He opened the ball, therefore, by

launching his entire force of dragoons against the Highland army. Into the storm and up the hill they went, over a thousand strong, Ligonier's, Hamilton's, which had been at Prestonpans, and Cobham's; but it was noticed there was no fire or dash in their charge. They advanced, say the Jacobite accounts, as if conscious of being the victims of a blunder. Two-thirds of the horses were quite raw, and when the Highlanders reserving their fire with admirable control poured it into the dragoons at twenty paces, the scene was one of unutterable confusion. All that Wolfe could see was a mob of terrified horses, some riderless, others bestrode by panic-stricken troopers, streaming back out of the darkness and the smoke. What was left of Ligonier's and Hamilton's, pursued by scattered bands of Highlanders, burst in upon the right wing of their own infantry, throwing them into considerable confusion. The remnants of Cobham's, better in hand, galloped down between the two armies, drawing on themselves the fire of the front Highland line. Some of the troopers, however, under the brave Whitney who had distinguished himself at Prestonpans, recovered from the shock of the first discharge, and closing up their ranks, rode knee to knee, right into and over the foremost ranks of the rebels. Here a frightful mêlée ensued; the agile Highlanders clinging to the long skirts of the dragoons, pulled them from their horses, using dirk and claymore against man and beast indiscriminately. Following on the flying heels of the cavalry, the greater part of the Highland line, though against the orders of their commander, Lord George Murray, burst out in pursuit, and rushed down before

the wind and rain upon the English ranks. Firing their muskets as they came on, they then flung them away, and with broadsword and target threw themselves with incredible fury on the stolid, pipe-clayed soldiers of Dettingen and Fontenoy. The English infantry, blinded by the storm and soaked to the skin, received them with a volley so feeble that even the Jacobite writers admit the damp powder. Their first line was broken and part of the second, but the remainder stood firm. Among the latter was Barrel's regiment, who, extending on their left, and with drier powder than the rest, kept up a steady fire. By this the onslaught of one wing of the Highland line was not only broken, but even thrown into something of a panic.

From this moment the battle of Falkirk seems to melt away into chaos. That some of the Highlanders were running away as fast as their legs could carry them from imaginary pursuers is quite certain, as is the fact that the majority of the royal army were moving almost as fast in another direction with rather more reason for their panic. The encounter had lasted about twenty minutes, and the Highlanders had undoubtedly had upon the whole the best of it. But their partial check upon the wing where Wolfe was fighting, the fierceness of the storm, the gathering darkness, and their want of discipline, caused, according to their own chroniclers, the most utter confusion, and prevented any serious attempt at pursuit. The English, though in some disorder, were covered in their retreat by Barrel's and another regiment. There was no very decided advantage on either side; but a good appearance of victory was given to the rebels from the fact of Hawley abandoning his camp

and his cannon, and falling back through the night on Edinburgh. The camp was abandoned simply because no troops without food and shelter could have existed through such a night after such a day, and there was no dry powder left. The guns were needlessly lost through the misconduct of a single officer, who was tried by court-martial, but anticipated punishment by shooting himself.

Throughout the next day it rained so heavily that scarcely any one in the Jacobite quarters at Falkirk stirred outside; even the dead were left unburied. A writer who took part in the battle describes the grim appearance on that second evening after the rain, of the naked bodies scattered all over the heath and gleaming white in the darkness. He remarks also how readily you could distinguish, though all were stripped, the English soldiers from the clansmen by the ghastly gashes of the broadsword on the heads and shoulders of the dead.

The news of Falkirk filled London once more with something of the panic that had shaken the court and society to their foundations in the previous autumn. The Duke of Cumberland started instantly for the north, and accomplished the distance between the English and Scottish capitals in the amazingly short space of four days; this, it must be remembered, was over muddy roads before the period of Macadam. He was received with enthusiastic bell-ringing and cannonading by the loyal inhabitants of Edinburgh, and great festivities were planned; but the Duke curtly intimated rather by action than by speech that the moment was too serious for pageants and compliments. He arrived after travelling

by night and day on the morning of the 30th, snatched a couple of hours' rest on the couch so lately occupied by the Prince, and then set to work to astonish everybody with his energy. He transacted all the necessary business with the generals and staff of the army, received deputations of citizens and the great families in state, inspected guns, troops, and horses with the utmost minuteness, and upon the next morning put himself at the head of the army in a coach and six presented to him by the city, and marched for the north.

Wolfe was once more under a leader for whom, then at any rate, he felt the greatest regard and enthusiasm. The Duke was not a great soldier, but he was a good one, probably the best of the English generals at that period of lamentable deficiency. His birth no doubt lent lustre to such talents as he had, and to the personal bravery for which he was certainly conspicuous. The bustling soldier did not remain longer in the coach and six than was due to the ceremony of the occasion, but mounting his horse outside the city was soon hurrying along with his troops on the heels of the rebels. Such a race could only be that of the hare and the tortoise. The winter was an unusually bad one, the roads were axle-deep, the bridges had been destroyed. From having been only a single day behind the Jacobite army at Stirling, he entered Perth four days after they had left it. There, baffled by the weather and the agility of his more nimble foe, he halted his army for a fortnight, for five thousand Hessians under their Prince were landing at Edinburgh. Hurrying back in person to

meet them, the Duke brought the foreigners to Perth, and leaving them as a garrison to that city and the neighbouring passes, he resumed his march northward with the English army at a leisurely pace. The country through which the royal troops were now passing abounded with malcontents and potential rebels, or the families of those who were actually in arms with the Prince. Parties were sent out in all directions to intimidate the former and to seize the latter, while ships carrying supplies moved up the coast parallel with the army. The rebels in two bodies were now far to the northward, and converging on Inverness. The Duke, hampered with his artillery and baggage-train, was fairly beaten by the bad weather, and when he arrived at Aberdeen decided to remain there till spring. The troops, however, were not idle, for the time spent at Aberdeen was fully taken up with constant drills and exercises, and in instilling loyalty, with a somewhat harsh hand no doubt, upon the surrounding districts.

In the meantime Prince Charles was growing terribly short of provisions. The supplies sent to him from France were seized by British ships, and though in the wild north he had tapped a prolific recruiting ground, there was little amid those barren hills upon which to feed an army. The crisis, however, was approaching that was to finally decide the fate of the rival dynasties and to some extent of the nation. With the lengthening days and drying winds of early April the royal army marched out of Aberdeen upon the road to Inverness. On the 12th the troops crossed the Spey unmolested, wading up to their waists in the water, still chill with wintry snows. On the 14th they came upon some of the Prince's

outposts. After some light skirmishing the latter retired to Inverness, and the English army halted at Nairn, twelve miles away, where with much feasting and revelry they proceeded to celebrate the birthday of the Duke.

The Prince's headquarters had now been for some time at Inverness. Upon the 15th, in the gray of early morning, he marched his half-starved army out to Drummossie Moor, near Culloden House, to await his enemy. Though with a greatly inferior force, he had no choice but to fight, for his troops were reduced to their last morsel of food, and had no prospect of procuring any more.

There was no such need, however, for hurry on the Royalist side. The whole of that day and night had been appointed for a festival, and the Prince got news that both horse and foot were doing full justice to the occasion. It seemed a great opportunity for a night-march and a surprise. The attempt was made, but there was blundering and miscalculation. Daylight broke on the Highland army long before they reached their goal, and hurried them back, tired, hungry, and disheartened, to snatch a few hours' sleep before their well-fed, vigorous foe should be upon them.

By eleven o'clock the royal army was drawn up in order of battle on Culloden Moor. "We will give them another Fontenoy!" had shouted the Highlanders the day before. Poor fellows, they were themselves to get something worse than Dettingen!

Reinforcements had reached Prince Charles in the night; but his force was still considerably inferior to that of the English, which numbered nearly ten thousand men. James Wolfe's regiment stood upon the left of the front

line. The Thirty-Seventh, the Twenty-First, the Fourteenth, the Thirty-Fourth, and the First Scots Royals completed it in the order named. Behind these were the Eighth (General Wolfe's), the Twenty-Fifth, the Twentieth, the Forty-Eighth, and the Thirty-Fifth. The third line was composed of the Twenty-Seventh and Thirteenth, with Battereau's and Howard's regiments. Upon the left were Kerr's dragoons, upon the right Cobham's, while in the rear of all stood the Campbells guarding the baggage. The regiments behind overlapped those in front, so that the gaps between the extremities of the foremost battalions were supported by the centre of the one in the rear. In each of these gaps were planted two pieces of cannon. Upon the right of the English was Culloden House, upon their left a long stone wall. It had rained heavily all the earlier part of the morning, but a high wind towards noon had blown most of the rain away, and the wind was this time in the backs of the English.

The Highland army was drawn up in two lines. Opposite to Wolfe's position, on the right that is to say, stood the men of Athol, the Camerons, and the Stewarts of Appin. Alongside of these, in the front line, were the Frasers, MacIntoshes, M'Laughlans, M'Leans, Stewarts, Farquharsons, Clanranald, Keppoch, and Glengarry. Behind, in the second line, stood the Ogilvies and Gordons, together with the French and Irish and other miscellaneous companies of the Prince's supporters. Lord George Murray was in command.

The superiority of the Highlander, armed as he was, over the regular infantry soldier at close quarters, had been recognised as a formidable difficulty ever since the

disaster of Prestonpans. Falkirk had certainly done nothing to allay the anxiety. The target upon the clansman's left arm caught the bayonet-thrust of the soldier, and turning it aside left the latter wholly exposed to the deadly strokes of the claymore, wielded with all the quickness and skill of a practised swordsman. The Duke of Cumberland, to meet this difficulty, had given special orders that each soldier instead of lunging with his bayonet at the man immediately opposite to him, should strike at the one next upon the right, so as to pierce him under the sword-arm upon the unprotected side. The irregular fashion, however, in which the Highlanders rushed upon their foe, would probably have rendered any such cut-and-dried methods ineffectual when the moment of collision came.

The Duke now addressed his army. He assured them that no quarter would be given; a statement which, though quite justified by the traditional practice of the Highlanders, was untrue so far as this particular campaign had gone. He told them to dismiss from their minds all former failures, and that their lives and the welfare of their country depended on their valour. "Flanders, Flanders!" was shouted all along the British ranks, and the troops showed the utmost eagerness to be led to the attack.

There was still rain in the wind that blew in the face of the Highlanders, and they made some unsuccessful attempts to better their position. The skies soon cleared, however, and the Jacobite army opened the battle with their artillery; but their guns were badly served, and did little damage. The English cannon, on the other hand, played on the enemy with an accuracy that goaded

the clansmen beyond endurance. In none of the previous battles had they been much annoyed by the "musket's mother"; that they stood it now for upwards of half an hour is remarkable. Wishing the English to charge first, Murray had succeeded with some difficulty in restraining the impatience of the Highlanders; but at length the MacIntoshes near the centre of the line, who had never been in action before, could stand no longer, and burst from their ranks. It was the signal for a general onset. One after another, clan after clan, each for itself, went streaming over the soppy plain. Pressing their bonnets down on their heads, and stooping in the teeth of the wind, they made the last great onslaught in the history of their race. The grape-shot tore through them as they crossed the plain. The English infantry reserved their fire with admirable coolness till the surging sea of wild faces and gleaming claymores was almost upon them. It scarcely checked them. In the centre they broke through the first line of the English. On the right, where Barrel's and Munro's regiments stood, the attack was fiercest of all, but Wolfe and his comrades kept their ranks firm and beat them back. On the left the Macdonalds, charging up almost to the bayonets, wheeled suddenly without apparent cause and fled from the field. This they had indeed threatened to do for the slight they considered themselves to have suffered in being placed on the left instead of the right of the line. It was in vain that their leaders before the battle had tried to soothe their wounded feelings with promises and flattery. It was in vain that their own gallant chief Keppoch rushed single-handed upon the English bayonets, and fell pierced

with mortal wounds. The actual battle, like all others fought between the clansmen and regular soldiers, lasted about a quarter of an hour. Baffled in the deadly rush, fierce and formidable though it was for a brief space, the former were incapable of sustained effort. The dragoons rode out and threatened their flank. A panic seized them, and in a few moments all was wild, headlong flight. Short as was the struggle, however, the nature of it may be judged from the fact of Wolfe's regiment, which had to meet the onslaught of the Camerons and Atholmen, losing a hundred and twenty officers and soldiers killed and wounded out of a total of a little over three hundred.

There was some delay in following up the flying Highlanders. Jacobite writers say that the royal army was so shaken by the attack it could not all at once rally for the pursuit. However this may be, the dragoons did at last burst out on the broken fugitives, and the infantry at the same time pressing forward to the charge, the victory was absolute and complete.

Everyone knows how the Prince, blinded by tears of mortification, was hurried from the field by the Irishmen who chiefly surrounded him. He never met his troops again. His farewell message to them to save themselves, was from the circumstances of its utterance one of the most pathetic in history. It was accepted in two ways. Impartial verdict will be with the Prince's decision, even if a less abrupt and hasty fashion of communicating it had been better; but many of his followers considered it as base and cowardly desertion, since in their opinion there was as yet no cause for despair.

The slaughter after the battle was savage and relent-

less. About half the fugitives fled over the level moor towards Inverness; the rest, crossing the river Nairn, escaped to the hills. The former were ridden down and slaughtered at will by the dragoons, and nearly fifteen hundred Highlanders in all were left dead upon the field.

The royal army at once occupied Inverness. It was a poor squalid place in those days, and the Duke took up his abode in the only house in the place which was fit to shelter so august a personage. It was the same house which the unfortunate Prince Charles had so recently occupied. "I have had twa king's bairns," said the old Jacobite lady who owned it, "living wi' me in my time, and to tell you the truth, I wish I may never hae anither."

The hopes of the Jacobites, which in all quarters of Great Britain had for half a century been much more of a living reality than people are apt to remember, were extinguished for ever at Culloden. Many old people in the north actually died, it was said, of grief. But the joy in loyal circles, both in England and Scotland, was unbounded. The Duke was a hero: a grateful Parliament voted him £25,000 a year for life; and his jovial face appeared upon the signboards of half the public houses in Great Britain. Wolfe favours his maternal uncle at Pontefract with his views on Culloden as he had done in regard to Falkirk. He endorses all the other accounts that have come down to us; speaks of the cannon goading on the Highlanders to an attack, and how the latter rushed upon the English lines "with more fury than prudence, throwing down their muskets as they advanced." He speaks also of the attempted

surprise of the night preceding the battle, the failure of which he attributes, though of course wrongly, to superstition. "These circumstances," he concludes, "with many others I could name, will make every discerning man observe from whence only our success could proceed. I heartily wish you joy of the happy end of so horrid an undertaking, and may they ever be punished in the same manner who attempt the like."

An old story concerning Wolfe and the Duke of Cumberland may be quoted here for what it is worth. The latter, it is said, while riding over the battlefield after the victory, saw upon the ground a wounded Highlander glaring at him with looks, as he thought, of hatred and defiance. "Wolfe," said the Duke to his young brigade-major who was near him, "shoot me that Highland scoundrel who thus dares to look on us with such contempt and insolence." "My commission," replied Wolfe, "is at your Highness's disposal, but I never can consent to become an executioner."

CHAPTER IV

IN FLANDERS AND SCOTLAND, 1746-52

THE rebels had been crushed in the open field. It was now determined to take such measures as would ensure the country against a repetition of the scenes which the years 1745-46 had witnessed. Some of these measures were indisputably harsh; but the country had been badly frightened, and the poor Highlanders seemed to the troops of George the Second outside the pale of civilised nations. How Wolfe enjoyed the harrying and burning and driving off cattle, to which those districts who did not at once bring in their arms had to submit, he does not tell us; but we know that he was busily employed in carrying out his share of the duty imposed upon the army by its commander. Every point, too, of egress from the Highlands by sea and land was vigilantly watched. How the unfortunate Prince fared for those four months in which he was hunted as a fox through the mountains, survives as a kind of glorified fairy tale founded on fact. How real were the hardships of the royal outlaw, how miraculous his escapes, how genuine the fidelity of the simple clansmen who could have made their fortune by his capture or betrayal, is perhaps, for once, somewhat obscured by the romance which attaches to the tale.

In the beginning of the following winter Barrel's regiment was again ordered to Flanders. But before sailing Wolfe had an opportunity, for the first time since he had marched off Blackheath as a boy of fifteen carrying the colours of the Twelfth, of paying a visit to his parents. He was only allowed a fortnight, but that brief holiday must have been one of intense enjoyment to the little circle in Old Burlington Street. Wolfe's kit, too, was sadly in need of replenishment. And it is in connection with the money required for this new foreign campaign that we learn a curious instance of the condition of the pay-department in those days. For General Wolfe, Inspector of Marines, it will be remembered, seems to have been owed three years' pay, amounting to £1500, and to be at the time of his son's visit still vainly endeavouring to get some of it.

Things had gone well for France while the English troops were occupied in Scotland, and her armies had overrun most of the Austrian Netherlands. Attempts had been made to patch up a peace, but without success, and the militant monarch who sat upon the throne of England was still smarting from the sympathy shown by France for the Stuarts. In March the Dutch, Austrians, and English took the field. Their forces in all amounted to a hundred and twenty thousand men, and at their head was placed the burly victor of Culloden.

Wolfe was once more upon familiar ground and in not unfamiliar circumstances, for the allied troops lay for six weeks not only inactive, but ill-sheltered and half-starved. The French, in the meantime, who numbered a hundred and fifty thousand under Saxe, were well cared for by their more provident commanders.

Louis himself was on the point of arriving to grace the expected triumph of his arms with his august presence. He came, and Saxe advanced on Maestricht, then one of the strongest fortresses in Europe. Cumberland by forced marches threw himself between the French and the threatened city, and on the 2nd of July was fought the battle of Lauffeld. The English troops, and this time the cavalry no less than the infantry, covered themselves with glory. They were not, however, properly supported, and after a sanguinary struggle, in which twelve thousand Frenchmen fell, the Duke of Cumberland, beaten but not disgraced, led his army within the walls of Maestricht. The English, said Louis upon this occasion, "not only pay for all, but fight for all." The Duke himself performed prodigies of valour. His courage, indeed, at one period of the battle nearly caused his capture, being only rescued by a chivalrous charge of Sir John Ligonier at the head of a handful of men, Sir John himself falling a victim to the captivity from which he had saved his royal commander. Wolfe's pen is unhappily almost silent during this campaign. We know, however, from the *Gazette* that he was slightly wounded, and a story, that has always been accepted, tells us that he was publicly thanked for his services by the Duke.

Most of the Netherlands were now in the hands of the French. Maestricht alone held out, and with the approach of winter, after the leisurely fashion of those days, both armies went into winter quarters.

Several of the English regiments returned home in November, and with them came Wolfe, who now for the first time got a liberal allowance of leave, which he spent with his parents in London. It is something

of a shock to find the old campaigner, a soldier of Germany, of Flanders, and of Scotland, already familiar with Highland broadswords and French bayonets, and carrying several years of individual responsibility, celebrating his twenty-first birthday! It was a precocious age, of course; but Wolfe's is one of those cases that sets us wondering whether it was the men or the times which were so different. After reading his letters, even at this early period, the former supposition is irresistible. It was during this winter, too, while in London that Wolfe first met the young lady whose insensibility to his devotion clouded his happiness for so many years, and formed the one bit of sentiment in his active and rugged life. The hard-hearted fair was a daughter of Sir Wilfrid Lawson of Isell, and a maid of honour to the Princess of Wales. It seems clear that Wolfe had already made something of a name for himself; otherwise a mere captain of infantry, without money, or personal attractions, or any social advantages, would hardly have been found in fashionable society, or been in the way of paying addresses to ladies about the court. Wolfe, however, was not permitted to make love too long. With the opening of spring he was once more on the war-path. This time he was specially detailed to join a body of English troops quartered with the Austrian army near Breda; and he was sent there as a person not merely of soldierly capacity, but also of tact and good sense—desirable qualities in a camp of foreigners and allies. The Duke, too, declared himself anxious to forward the young soldier in the profession, and announced privately his intention of giving him a majority free in a certain regiment whose lieutenant-colonel was

dying, which meant, or might mean, the two steps at once. But all parties were now anxious for peace, and after the repulse of the French from Maestricht, the preliminaries were signed at Aix-la-Chapelle.

Unlike the two other great contests in which Wolfe was engaged at the beginning and end of his life, the seven years of fighting on the Continent, which had now closed, resulted in absolutely nothing. Culloden decided in a few minutes the fate of Britain, and Quebec in almost as short a time changed the history of the world. The peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, in April 1748, restored everything to its original position, and declared that a gigantic slaughter had been useless, and that tens of thousands of brave men had laid down their lives in vain.

The English troops lingered on till nearly the end of the year in their continental quarters. Wolfe had now served in seven campaigns. He had had no opportunity of seeing much more of life than was to be found in camps and garrisons. Now that the war was over, and there was a prospect of idling aimlessly in Flanders for several weeks, he was eager to get leave of absence, to see something of the great cities of Europe, and to acquire by study and travel the knowledge that he considered necessary to complete his education as a soldier. Torn from school at fifteen, though, to be sure, willingly enough, and occupied almost ever since in arduous campaigns, Wolfe felt that in certain matters of education and experience he was still deficient. Judged by the standard of the times, such modesty in an infantry officer of his attainments would have been entirely misplaced. But Wolfe's standard was not that of the times; it was his own, and one extremely un-

common, beyond a doubt, in the British army of that period. His constant thought was how to improve his knowledge of his profession, and to make himself a complete soldier. The apathy of the English army in this respect shocked him. To possess courage and a knowledge of the ordinary routine drill was considered by most officers to be the limit of their requirements. Wolfe, however, had far different notions. His profession occupied his whole soul and thoughts. He worked hard at military history and tactics. He closely studied the great fortifications of the Low Countries. He followed eagerly the course of those campaigns in which he did not happen to be himself engaged; and, at the same time, he carried such zeal and spirit into his ordinary regimental duties that he left his mark on every company and every corps he served with. He thought, too, that a knowledge of the world, in the better and wider sense of the term, was indispensable to the complete equipment of a young soldier who wished and hoped to rise high in his profession. In the weeks following the peace he felt that he could leave his post for his own improvement and without detriment to any one concerned, and the irritability which was constitutional with him breaks out more than once in his letters home when he finds his application refused. "'Tis unaccountable," says he, "that any one who wishes to see a good army can oppose men's enlarging their notions, or acquiring that knowledge with a little absence which they can't possibly meet with at home, especially when they are supposed masters of their present employment and really acquainted with it."

So Wolfe did not see Italy or Vienna, or the Prussian

army, all pleasures which he had promised himself had the fates been more propitious. He finds, however, little sympathy in this matter from his parents. His mother, good soul, had fixed her thoughts on plans for his future which seemed to her practical mind of much greater import; she was anxious to see him well married, and with true maternal pride felt confident that her valiant son might fairly look high. It must be confessed that Mrs. Wolfe's matrimonial schemes savour of finance to an almost cold-blooded extent; and she catalogues her heiresses, singling out one at Croydon with £30,000, and appraises her son James at his value in the market with a candour that is amusing enough. Wolfe, however, does not seem to have responded very eagerly, as was only natural, seeing that his heart was already touched. And when he returned home, just in time to spend Christmas with the old people in London, he at once resumed his attentions to the fair maid of honour who had already partially enslaved him.

But his time for such tender dallyings was short. The Duke had not forgotten him, and he found himself appointed major of the Twentieth Regiment with orders to join that corps in Stirling without delay. He arrived there in the first month of the new year, 1749, and the lieutenant-colonel's appointment to the government of Nova Scotia placed him almost immediately in command of the regiment. Now the command of a regiment on the Highland frontier meant much more at that moment than a similar responsibility at Dover, or Exeter, or York. It meant the pacification and settlement of a country recently torn by civil war. It was not an agreeable position officially; while regarded simply as a

station, it had no redeeming features whatever for the English officer of that day. To Wolfe it seemed exile without the fighting that to his warlike soul would have made Timbuctoo a paradise, and that he loved for its own sake with a passion uncommon even among soldiers. Thousands of hot-headed, hare-brained individuals have no doubt had as great a partiality for it; but it is another matter with a serious, sober, religious, delicately-constituted being like Wolfe. One turns not inaptly to Washington for something of a parallel, the very man whose opportunities were indirectly created by Wolfe's genius. The great Virginian was a lover of books, an admirable man of business, a successful farmer, grave in manner, devout in temperament. That he should have been at the same time a good soldier is in no way singular. But he had to a high degree the same keen physical enjoyment in fighting that Wolfe had. Both of these men were conscientious to a fault: neither of them would have risked the life of a single soldier for their own glorification; but to each of them, beyond a doubt, the greatest joy in life was the actual shock of battle.

Wolfe was pleased enough at his promotion, and he had cause to be, for in those times merit alone rarely rose with such rapid steps. But he did not like Scotland. What he had seen of its climate and conditions might be bearable in the excitement of a campaign; but to such a prospect in peace even his new honours could hardly reconcile him. He was love-sick, too, very love-sick indeed, and the greatest hero is not proof against that. It was about this time also that his constitutional delicacy, aggravated by the hardships of so many campaigns, developed into those ailments

which tortured him more or less for the rest of his life. His position, as has been already said, was no ordinary one. Behind the wild peaks, whose shadowy outlines Wolfe could plainly see from his quarters in Stirling Castle, the clansmen were brooding over their wrongs. Stripped of their arms and their national garb, saddled with a rent-charge for the more or less wretched holdings they occupied, robbed of the congenial excitement of fight and foray, and with the dismal option of working or starving, never surely were an ignorant peasantry in such a pitiable plight. It was no wonder that they had given and still gave the garrisons who were sent to watch them plenty to do. Among the Lowland families, too, Jacobitism, though a somewhat despairing one, was still a living force. The commanders of regiments were expected not merely to carry into execution the martial law under which the clans now lay writhing; they were expected also to conciliate the Jacobite aristocracy, to temper so far as possible justice with mercy, and to hold in even balance the two parties whose passions and animosities had been so fiercely stirred. Wolfe set himself to his task with a will. He seems to have had no false modesty on account of his two-and-twenty years. In his first regimental orders he recommends his subalterns never to think that they can do too much. He demands a written list of each company from their captains, with notes so far as possible upon the character of each man; he orders the officers to visit the soldiers' quarters frequently, to make occasional rounds themselves at night, and not to trust wholly to sergeants' reports, and lastly, to watch carefully the physical condition and appearance of the men.

Before long, however, the regiment was moved to Glasgow, a place which, though greatly loathing at first, Wolfe afterwards grew to regard with something like toleration. He was in very low spirits at this time, it should be remembered, partly because he was in love, and partly because his health was bad. As to the first business there is a long letter extant to his great friend, Rickson of the Forty-Seventh. It is in reply to a confidence of the same nature imparted to him by that young gentleman, and relates chiefly to Miss Lawson. Wolfe declares to his friend that the maid of honour has won all his affections. "Some people," he naïvely says, "call her handsome; I that am her lover don't think her a beauty; she has much sweetness of temper, sense enough, and is very civil and engaging in her behaviour. She refused a clergyman with £1300 a year, and is now addressed by a very rich knight." As the knight appears to be of doubtful sanity, Wolfe anticipates no serious opposition in that quarter. He thinks himself over young to be married, which in the commander of a regiment and such a veteran soldier seems surely superfluous. Still, if he does not step in now some one else will, and that would be terrible; and yet this miserable Scotch banishment, which to Wolfe's anxious mind seems likely to be endless, makes any furthering of his suit impossible. "But," says the ardent lover with somewhat paradoxical quaintness, "if I'm kept long here the fire will be extinguished; young flames must be kept constantly fed or they'll evaporate." Wolfe did himself an injustice there; he was kept a very long time indeed in the North, but the flame of his passion took some years to burn com-

pletely out, and for a long time beyond a doubt it affected his spirits and actions. To add to the disconsolate lover's embarrassments, the General and Mrs. Wolfe, particularly the latter, had still got their eyes on the Croydon heiress with £30,000, and were opposed to the maid of honour; on the score of "ill health," said the astute mother; but this is as it may be. However much Wolfe's disappointment may have for a time affected his attitude towards society, it made no difference whatever to his professional energy and his efforts to improve himself. For the latter he finds in the University at Glasgow ready facilities, and hires tutors, with whom he works hard in his spare hours at Latin and mathematics. He must not be taken too seriously at this period of depression, when he declares that the "barren battalion conversation rather blunts the faculties than improves: my youth and vigour bestowed idly in Scotland; my temper daily changed with discontent, and from a man may become a martinet or a monster."

Wolfe's first judgments of the men of Glasgow were "that they were civil, designing, and treacherous, with their immediate interest always in view. They pursue trade with warmth and a necessary mercantile spirit arising from the baseness of their other qualifications." As for the women they "are coarse, cold, and cunning, for ever inquiring after men's circumstances: they make that the standard of their good breeding." The ostentatious piety of the citizens called forth his satire; but at the same time, in his capacity of commanding officer, he took his soldiers regularly to the kirk every Sunday, where for two hours upon a stretch he was preached at, he declares, by divines "so truly

and obstinately dull that they seem to shut out knowledge at every entrance."

The summer of 1749 was wet and cold, and most prejudicial to Wolfe's now uncertain health. Still his spirits grew somewhat more cheerful. He made acquaintances among the neighbouring gentry, and his colonel, Lord George Sackville, spent some time with the regiment, greatly to Wolfe's own personal enjoyment. The making of roads was one of the chief instruments of reconstruction in the Highlands, and nearly half the regiment were detailed during the summer upon this duty. In November, when the Twentieth were moved in due course to Perth, Wolfe has so far reconsidered his earlier opinions of Glasgow as to concede that the regiment may be going farther and faring worse.

This proved to be the case, for Perth at that time was even a dirtier and more ill-built town than Glasgow or Stirling, and was surrounded by a wet and marshy country. Moreover the regiment now changed colonels, Lord Bury, the eldest son of Lord Albemarle, being appointed to the command. The full colonels of those days were something more than the titular chiefs of regiments. Though seldom with the corps that bore their name, they paid periodical visits of inspection to its quarters, and sometimes interfered in its management after a fashion that was not always in harmony with the ideas of its officers. Lord Bury proved very exacting in his demand on Wolfe for written information of all details connected with his command, though he did not give himself the trouble to make the personal acquaintance of his new regiment. In April, 1750, Wolfe was made glad by receiving his commission as lieutenant-

colonel at the instigation, it would seem, of the Duke of Cumberland. It was probably a unique instance at that time of a young officer by his own merits enforcing recognition, as it were, in the teeth of a rotten system. Wolfe had powerful friends in the Duke and Lord George Sackville; but he had won their support not by adventitious aids, but by his coolness and bravery in war, his industry and capacity in garrison work.

Perth, unlike Glasgow, furnished no professors, and Wolfe's studies were in consequence interrupted. The Highlanders, so rigorously were they watched by the chain of outposts which were manned from the big garrisons, had almost ceased to give trouble. "They are now forced," says Wolfe to his father, "to abandon their favourite practice of stealing cattle, and are either reduced to live honestly and industriously or starve through excess of idleness." As his duties became easier and more monotonous, Wolfe's nervous temperament, restless as it was through excess of energy, began to fret at such comparative inactivity. He hints very strongly that if his own service does not give him the opportunity he is longing for, he will seek one that does. "I am still determined to employ some years of my life in the real business of an officer, and not sacrifice all my time to idleness or our trifling soldiership; some of the nations of Europe will soon give me an opportunity to put this resolution into practice."

One can hardly help smiling at the unreasonableness of the reproaches against fortune thus implied by the impetuous young warrior. He is twenty-three, has served through seven campaigns, and is a lieutenant-colonel; and yet from his letters at this period one

would suppose that he was rusting in useless and middle-aged idleness. There is no doubt that Wolfe had now reason to think his life would not be a long one. He says very little about it; but in his very eagerness and impatience to be up and doing, and the great pains he took to utilise the passing hour, however much he might resent its tedium, there lurks somehow the consciousness of a destiny to be fulfilled and a brief time of preparation for its fulfilment. He was full now of a scheme for studying artillery and engineering at Metz, and at the same time perfecting himself in the French language, so useful then both in our American and European wars. Officers in those days, however, were not free agents with regard to going abroad during their leave, and were often expressly forbidden to do so. At the imbecility, as he styles it, of this custom he rails with bitter and caustic pen. He may go to London and spend months, if he is fool enough to do so, in idle dissipation; but for some occult reason the study of his profession at the great military centres of the Continent is peremptorily forbidden.

Lord Bury, however, his colonel, will not spare him from the regiment for leave of any sort, and as there are neither teachers of Latin nor mathematics in Perth, he consoles himself with grouse-shooting on the hills, walking three days consecutively from five in the morning till night, greatly to the benefit of his health, but not much to the detriment of the birds. It is interesting to note that he was shooting grouse before the 15th of July. No close time for game would naturally have existed in the Highlands at that time. One is inclined to remark that if Wolfe could do nothing with

the grouse early in July he must indeed have been a poor performer. Shooting on the wing, however, in 1750 was in a very elementary stage of development. Yet game was abundant and sport "elegant," says Wolfe. When a Virginian or a Marylander to-day tells the unthinking Englishman that his sport has been "elegant," he is credited, let it be noted, with the use of a vulgar modern Americanism.

Wolfe, however, being a bad shot, remarks with some naïveté that he had "an equal share of the labour and less of the entertainment." He developed while in Scotland a strong love for sport, though it is doubtful if he ever became very proficient in any branch of it. His cousins in Ireland sent him over dogs, and he became an ardent fisherman. The regiment kept hounds, and Wolfe, who had always two or three horses, was evidently fond of hunting. He never, indeed, seems to have been a good horseman, but horsemanship had no particular connection with hunting in those days. Sportsmen rode out then to watch hounds work, not to gallop one another down over an enclosed country. The hounds ran at a very leisurely pace, and though they gave a good account of their foxes, they sometimes took nearly all day to kill them.

Scotland was now very quiet, and in the autumn of this year, having in the meantime moved with his regiment to Dundee, Wolfe got his leave. It was accompanied, however, by a command that he was not to leave England. This disappointment, though rather expected, started him off again on the old subject. "How much," he writes to his father, "does the Duke mistake my sentiments, or how equally does he oppose

the only method that can be fallen upon to preserve any knowledge of military affairs in the army, I shan't say to introduce it, for infinite pains have been taken to make us acquainted with some particular branches which yet do not amount to all that may be required from an officer. I believe you would be very glad to see your son from amongst the ignorant, and wish to have a representative something worthy of yourself."

Wolfe reached London in the middle of November, stopping on his way to visit his relatives, the Sotherons and Thompsons, in the neighbourhood of Pontefract. His love affair had now come to a definite conclusion. Whether this was due to the reluctance of the young lady herself, or to the opposition of Wolfe's parents, is not quite clear. The only jar in the affectionate correspondence of a lifetime between Wolfe and his mother had arisen over this incident. Mrs. Wolfe seems to have thrown out some inuendos regarding Miss Lawson which, it is to be feared, were really unjustifiable; and her son is very sore upon the subject as well as in great depression at the loss of his love. There is no saying but what Wolfe in this state of mind might have accepted the Croydon heiress had she been offered him; but the chance, if ever there was one, had slipped away, for she was married that same winter, curiously enough, to his old friend, John Warde, not George the dragoon, and became mistress of Squerryes Court.

Wolfe's disappointments in love and travel were too much for him, and he plunged for the first and last time in his life into the whirlpool of frivolity and debauchery that was then the normal condition of men of fashion. The madness was as brief as it was

alien to his nature and his principles. A few weeks of it cured him of any wish to repeat such a performance, and left him not only damaged in health but thoroughly disgusted with himself. He returned to Scotland in the spring of 1751, and this time to quarters in Banff, where the dreary outlook and social isolation harmonised well with his penitent and sorrowful mood. He sat down at once and poured out his soul to his friend Rickson, who was now in Nova Scotia as aide-de-camp to the new governor of that province. After begging him to send further information about America, he declares that in his visit to London he committed more imprudences than in all his life before, and that "not out of vice which is the extraordinary part of it." He has escaped, however, he goes on to say, and is "once more master of his reason and intends to remain so."

Wolfe's work in Scotland became now of a most monotonous kind. The greater part of his men were scattered in small outposts along the Highland frontier, and the clansmen, held in the iron grip of a rigorous martial rule, had learned at last that their liberty of license was at an end. They were for the time, however, very miserable. A great scarcity of food prevailed, and the outlying garrisons themselves had much difficulty in procuring food enough for their wives and children. The only police work of any importance was the intercepting of Scotch officers in the French service who came over to the Highlands in search of recruits. The notion of forming these sinewy, martial mountaineers into British regiments was not to take shape until Pitt came into power; but it had been in Wolfe's mind for a long time previous to that, and it seems quite possible,

for many reasons, that the original idea came from him. Road-making varied the monotony of garrison life, but it was poor work to a man of Wolfe's professional zeal and lofty ambition. His health grew bad again, and he snatched a fortnight to try the waters of Peterhead, but without any good effect. As to his own small garrison at Banff, he writes sensibly but humorously to his father on the position in which he finds himself, "at three-and-twenty a military parent." The General, he thinks, bearing in mind the late outbreak in London, may smile at the situation; but it enforces self-control upon him, he says, as an adviser of youthful subalterns, and playfully adds that "I may yet do good by directing where I cannot always execute." He also declares that the sense of duty to his profession is of the greatest help to him in this matter.

The Twentieth was now ordered to Inverness, at that time, probably, the most wretched and squalid of all Scotch towns. Though inhabited chiefly by Lowlanders it was in a sense the capital of the Highlands, and the head-quarters in any case of the Jacobite interest. The accommodation for troops was of the worst kind. The two royal visits it had received during the rebellion disclosed the fact that there was only one house in the town that had a room without a bed in it. Wolfe was not likely, in the heated political temperature of those days, to look upon a nest of Jacobites with toleration, and he uses very strong epithets in regard to the citizens of Inverness. "Those," he says, "who pretend the greatest attachment to the Government, and who feed upon the public purse, seem to distinguish themselves for greater rudeness than the open and professed Jacobites."

The antagonism between the military and the populace in such a place at such a time was inevitable. Wolfe, however, set himself as usual to try and make the troops as popular as might be. He made friends with the neighbouring families, and took his officers religiously to the assembly balls where "fair rebels, wild as the hills and with a strong Erse dialect," found their love of dancing and the attentions of the red-coats too strong for their Jacobite principles. The Colonel himself mentions leading out on one occasion the daughter of that valiant Laird of Keppoch who will be remembered as having thrown himself on the English bayonets at Culloden rather than share in the disgraceful retreat of the Macdonalds. There seems to have been nothing for hounds to hunt, or for Wolfe to shoot at except a few woodcocks. But he was delighted to discover in that dark outpost of civilisation a professor of mathematics, whom he at once engaged to read with him daily. There was also a good deal of hospitality at Culloden House, where a son of the convivial and celebrated Lord President Forbes welcomed Wolfe as a constant visitor. A change for the better had in one sense taken place since the father's rule, during which it was said that "very few left the house sober, and the majority couldn't leave it at all."

There is a letter from him to his mother, written at midnight on his twenty-fifth birthday, that is characteristic of the man and illustrative of the reflective and serious side of his nature. "The winter wears away," it runs, "and so do our years, and so does life itself; and it matters little where a man passes his days and what station he fills, or whether he be great or considerable; but it imports him

something to look to his manner of life. This day I am five-and-twenty years of age, and all that time is as nothing. But it is worth a moment's consideration that one may be called away on a sudden, unguarded and unprepared, and the oftener these things are entertained the less will be the dread or fear of death. You will judge by this sort of discourse that it is the dead of night, when all is quiet and rest, and one of those intervals wherein men think of what they really are, and what they really should be, how much is expected, and how little performed. . . . You advise me well. You have pointed out the only one way where there can be no disappointment and comfort that will never fail us—carrying men steadily and cheerfully on their journey, and a place of rest at the end." He goes on to deplore, as indeed he often does, the nervous irritability and fretful impatience that get the better of him at times in spite of everything. "There are times when men fret at trifles and quarrel with their toothpicks. In one of these ill habits I exclaim against the present condition and think it is the worst of all; but, coolly and temperately, it is plainly the best. There is a meanness and a baseness not to endure with patience the little inconveniences we are subject to." And in answer to some misconception of his reasons for wishing to come south he breaks out in less gentle mood: "The change of conversation, the fear of becoming a mere ruffian, and of imbibing the tyrannical principles of an absolute commander, or giving way insensibly to the temptations of power till I became proud, insolent, and intolerable. These considerations will make me wish to leave the regiment before next winter. That by frequent-

ing men above myself I may know my true condition, and by discoursing with the other sex may learn some civility and mildness of carriage, but never pay the price of the last improvement with the loss of reason. Better be a savage of some use than a gentle, amorous puppy, obnoxious to all the world. One of the wildest of wild clans is a worthier being than a perfect Philander."

His colonel, Lord Bury, arrived at Inverness in April. After Wolfe's conciliatory and tactful attitude towards the citizens, Lord Bury's first performance must have struck them with amazement as well as filled his subordinate with disgust. He was met by a civic deputation requesting that they might be allowed to entertain him at dinner on the Duke of Cumberland's birthday. This was really going some length for a Jacobite corporation, and one wonders what their feelings must have been when this urbane specimen of nobility accepted the invitation, but insisted that the dinner should be on the anniversary of Culloden. This grim jest was too much for even Celtic hospitality. The honoured guest, however, threatened his entertainers with a military riot if they refused; and no doubt a man who could do this was capable of enjoying to the utmost the dinner provided for him under such conditions, and of drinking damnation to his hosts in their own wine with the most perfect equanimity.

In the following May, Wolfe marched out of Inverness at the head of his regiment. He had been there nearly a year, and left behind him many friends. In spite of the blunder of his erratic chief, his conciliatory attitude towards the natives had borne good fruit. The

Twentieth were now bound for Fort Augustus, and made their way thither along the great military road that had recently been constructed.

Wolfe's stay by the shores of Loch Ness was a much briefer one than he expected, for in June he received the joyful tidings that his application for leave of absence had been granted, and better still, that there was every prospect of his long-cherished dream of visiting the Continent being realised. He determined, however, to take Ireland on his way south. His uncle, Major Wolfe, who had lately retired on half-pay, lived in Dublin, and the old gentleman had always regarded his nephew with pride and affection. A spirited correspondence had long been kept up between them on military matters, concerning which they did not always agree, the elder warrior looking with some suspicion on the "modern notions" of the younger. They had agreed to differ on the subject so dear to both of them, but remained fast friends; and James Wolfe thought the opportunity a good one for seeing both his uncle and the land from which his family sprang. He spent a few days at Perth with the officers of his father's regiment, among whom he had several old friends. From thence he made his way to Glasgow, and in due course on to Port Patrick, where he took ship for Donaghadee in one of the primitive flat-bottomed craft that used in those days to carry mails and passengers across this narrow part of the Irish Channel.

Wolfe landed in Ireland early in July. Driving through the north in a post-chaise he arrived in Dublin "leaner than can be described, and burnt to a chip." He found his uncle in a hot fit of the gout and swathed

in flannels; and it is, therefore, unlikely that he introduced the vexed question of the relative merits of ancient and modern discipline into his conversation with that gallant veteran. Wolfe saw Dublin at the height of its somewhat meretricious splendour—a "prodigious city crowded with large-limbed people and handsome women," it seemed to him. Easily the second city of the kingdom, as it was then in population, it bore also the unmistakable stamp of a national capital. The Protestant yeomanry of those northern farms, which Wolfe found "equal in appearance to England," had been leaving by thousands for the mountains of Pennsylvania and Virginia. But the vast Catholic peasantry of the south and west were motionless in that long stupor of despair that lasted from the Boyne to Bunker's Hill. Rack-rents were drunk and feasted away in Dublin amid a curious blending of splendour and squalor, of refinement and vulgarity. Futile oratory rolled in ceaseless volumes to the roof of the Parliament House, and a happier wit sparkled in court and coffee-house. The duellist above all was in his glory, and trailing his coat with an assiduity that was never approached in the most fire-eating periods of English society. All this the grave, practical young colonel saw and noted; and he had every chance, for his uncle's headquarters were at Lucas's Coffee-House, which was not only the chosen rendezvous for the wit and gallantry of the town, but commanded a full view of the famous yard behind it, where affairs of honour were almost daily settled.

Wolfe left Ireland in September, and after a brief sojourn in London, crossed the Channel early in October. After his long exile in the wilds of Scotland, he seems

to have thought that a course of Paris, in such fashion as he would take it, might after all be the most profitable as well as the pleasantest way of spending the rest of his holiday. At any rate he went there first, and there he stayed till its expiration.

CHAPTER V

IN ENGLISH QUARTERS

EVEN without the evidence of Wolfe's own letters we might be quite sure that he made the most of his winter in Paris. Lord Albemarle, the British Minister (and his colonel's father), received him cordially, made him free of his own house, and introduced him to the society of notable people. Among the Englishmen in Paris Wolfe made the acquaintance of the young Duke of Richmond, Philip Stanhope, son of Lord Chesterfield, and of the little William Hamilton, the future husband of the lady whom forty years later Nelson made so famous. He was introduced to the King and the royal family, and was entertained by Madame de Pompadour at her toilette. He was offered the position of governor to the young Duke of Richmond, but refused it on the same principles that had caused him to discountenance the year before an attempt made by his friends to procure him a showy staff-appointment in Dublin. In Wolfe's opinion, which must certainly have been a unique one at that time, such appointments as these were unworthy of a serious soldier. They savoured too much of the bread of idleness, which to him was loathsome, and of that

flunkeyism which his soul abhorred. It is needless to say that he lost no time in putting himself in the hands of tutors, not only in the matter of the French language, but in fencing, and even in dancing, which he always considered a useful and even necessary part of a soldier's education. On his skill with the sword the French professors seem to have complimented him; but as for the gentler art he laments with some humour that he will never be able to do more than drag "my long bony figure through a minuet without attracting attention." He declares his constitution unequal to the hours of Parisian society; eleven finds him in bed, and at day-break he is in the saddle. Gay life still brings back to his mind his old love, "whose name even still I can never hear without a twitch." A letter at this time from his friend Gage (of future celebrity in the American War of Independence) tells him that the maid of honour still remains cold to all, which gives him at once fresh pangs and a melancholy consolation.

Wolfe's leave was cut somewhat shorter than he had anticipated by a peremptory order to rejoin his regiment, now again at Glasgow. We must follow him therefore back to Scotland, where, after an arduous journey in the new post-chaises, which knocked him about so that he had to take to saddle-horses, who galled him cruelly with their rough gait and twice fell head over heels in the road with him, he arrived in a bad humour to find his friends in a still worse plight. The major dead from a sudden fit of apoplexy, an ensign struck with paralysis, and another smitten with epilepsy at supper on the night of his arrival, made a gloomy welcome indeed. Wolfe himself fainted away on

this occasion for the first and only time in his life. In May, again, half the regiment are sick, "broiled in the sun one day, and shivering in greatcoats the next." The short summer is filled with road-making and fort-building on the banks of Loch Lomond. Occasional dinners with the Duke of Hamilton and his Duchess, one of the beautiful Miss Gunnings, break the monotony. As the summer weather and the shooting season comes on, together with a present of dogs from his Irish cousins, Wolfe's health improves again and his spirits rise. Before that, however, the change from the south to the raw damp of the Scotch climate had made him, as it always did, miserably ill. His spirits sank to zero. Glasgow, almost tolerated at one time, appeared more barbarous than ever after Paris and London; "Dinners and suppers of the most execrable food upon earth, and wine that approaches to poison. The men drink till they are excessively drunk. The ladies are cold to everything but a bagpipe—I wrong them there—there is not one that does not melt away at the sound of an estate."

It was the 8th of September when Wolfe and his men, having completed their term of northern service, marched out of Glasgow for the south. Ten days later they crossed the Esk; and Wolfe, though leaving behind him some fast friends, and the respect of every community he had sojourned in, shook the dust of Scotland from his feet for the last time with little reluctance.

The next four years of Wolfe's life must be rapidly passed over. They were spent entirely in garrisons and camps throughout the south and west of England. The country was in a continual state of suspense. The peace was felt to be but a truce, and the phantom of a French

invasion hovered unceasingly in the Channel. The army, which consisted of only about fifty regiments of infantry, besides cavalry and a small force of artillery and marines, was now to be increased. Several new battalions of infantry were raised, and Wolfe, who for some time had been urging the enrolment of the Highland clans as regiments, saw with satisfaction this admirable scheme at length carried into execution. In the meantime, while new battalions were gradually forming, the constant demand made upon the old ones even by the exigencies of peace is well illustrated by the variety of quarters and districts Wolfe and his men were called on to occupy. First they are at Dover Castle, lofty, wind-swept, and isolated. Insufferably dull it was, but for occasional balls, whither Wolfe invariably accompanies "the young people to see," he playfully declares, "that they don't fall in love. When the symptoms are perceived," he goes on, "we fall upon the delinquent without mercy till he is out of conceit with his own passion." Sometimes, too, the regiment is at Canterbury, or under canvas on the Kentish coast. Now again it is marching through the southern counties, and stationed at Exeter. This was a stronghold of Jacobitism at that period, and Wolfe found a lively prejudice existing in its society against the army. He at once tried his old Scotch receipt, and is soon able to report that he has "danced the officers into the good graces of the Jacobite ladies," naïvely adding, "It falls hard upon me because of my indolence and indifference about it." A provincial fine lady of that day, however, has left it on record that Wolfe was a much better performer than his modesty admits; that he showed

taste in selecting for himself the tallest and most graceful woman in the room whenever possible; and that he invariably bore himself on these occasions in the most joyous, animated, and genial manner. As a historical curiosity it may be worth noting that not a single man in Exeter would accept a regimental invitation on the King's birthday, though the ladies came fast enough.

It was while Wolfe was at Exeter that the first mutterings were heard of that great war to whose glorious termination he was himself to lend such notable assistance. Hostilities had not yet been declared, but the irritation was daily increasing. News had come of the aggressive movements of the French in America. Policies were shaping themselves in the silent forests of the Western Continent that were to prove of greater moment than all the schemes and treaties and conflicts of Europe. The French had presumed to dictate a western limit for the English colonies, and had planted forts in the wilderness beyond the frontiers of civilisation. They now declared in effect that British dominion in America was to be for ever limited to the strip along the sea-coast already settled, and that the vast inland continent, whose illimitable possibilities were just beginning to dawn on men's minds, belonged to France alone. The news of hostile movements had already reached England. Young Washington of Virginia, a youth just of age and rivalling Wolfe in genius and precocity, had advanced on the Ohio with a few hundred men. After fighting a large force of French and Indians through the whole of a rainy day he had been at length forced, through lack of powder and provi-

sions, to capitulate. The incident of the Great Meadows had created some considerable stir both in France and England. War was not yet declared, but after the curious fashion of those days such an obstacle was no hindrance to the most hostile operations. Braddock was accordingly despatched on that disastrous expedition, whose story has been told both by Thackeray and by Carlyle, and told by each in his most picturesque vein. One hundred men of the Twentieth sailed with the force, and it is said that, but for a lucky stroke of fate, Wolfe also had sailed with it on the general's staff.

War was now inevitable, but the Government still held back. General Wolfe is very solicitous that his son's regiment should not be ordered to serve on the fleet, knowing the latter's bad health, his misery at sea, and remembering his own sufferings in the expedition to Cartagena. All James Wolfe, however, asks for is action. He hates the sea sufficiently, but anticipating that it is there that the first successes of the war are likely to be, is anxious to share in them at any cost. He reminds his father that the naval officers have improved in spirit and courage, and with professional pride, as one soldier talking to another, he adds that *they* will be there to spur the blue-jackets on. To his mother Wolfe says he is determined never to give himself a moment's concern as to the nature of any service he may be ordered on. His only thought is to serve his King and country to the utmost of his power and ability. As to death he speaks of it with a fine scorn, which is only gentle out of respect to the natural fears of a fond mother. He asks her to remember that the Power which has hitherto preserved him may,

if it be His pleasure, continue to do so; "If not, it is a few days or a few years more or less, and those who perish in their duty and in the service of their country die honourably."

It was a keen disappointment to Wolfe when the full colonelcy of his regiment, owing to the succession of Lord Bury to his father's title, fell vacant, and was given to a lieutenant-colonel from outside. If the regiment had been given to a general it would have been another matter. The reason, no doubt, was to be found in the infamous system of officering the best infantry in Europe, a system in which merit and service were the last considerations. Wolfe hitherto had been singularly fortunate, and probably on this account he felt the appointment of Colonel Honeywood somewhat keenly. He need not have done so, for it appears that the King, who had a great deal to say in all these matters, merely thought that he was too young.

His disappointment soon passed, but he grew all the more keen for war. Quartered now at Winchester, he goes posting down to Portsmouth to see "the most formidable fleet that England had ever sent out,—the most splendid sight." The Duke gave him a cordial reception, and he dined on the flag-ship with Lord Anson.

It was now July, 1755. The fleet and the country were waiting for news of Braddock's expedition. In September it came; and it was to the effect that two-thirds of his army and sixty-eight of his officers had fallen before a small force of French and Indians in the dark woods which surrounded Fort du Quesne. Wolfe when he heard of it blazed out into passionate and characteristic indignation. "The cowardice of the

men," he believes, "exceeded the ignorance of the chief." Wolfe, however, had not met the American savage or the American backwoodsman in their native forests. But smarting with the disgrace on the Monongahela he declares that he has a mean opinion of the infantry; that they often, as they did with Braddock, kill their officers and one another in their confusion, and that their officers are themselves extremely ignorant. "Lazy are we in time of peace, with a want of common vigilance and activity in time of war. Our military education is by far the worst in Europe, and all our concerns are treated with contempt or totally neglected. It will cost us very dear some time hence; I hope the day is at a distance, but I fear it will come."

In another letter to his father, Wolfe remarks with some warmth how badly it speaks for the army that he is considered one of the best officers of his rank. He entirely disclaims any vanity in such a reflection; on the contrary, he feels uncomfortable from the prospect of having responsibilities thrown on him with the expectation of high performances for which he is not yet, in his own estimation, ripe. All indeed who loved their country had at this time ample reason for depression. England had been in worse plights, but seldom in such a state of confusion and doubt. Though still nominally at peace, she was fighting the French at this moment unsuccessfully both in America and the Indies. The King was in Hanover. The most incapable administration that has perhaps ever governed the country was in power. Pitt was nominally in office, but sullenly stood aloof biding his time. Sir Edward Hawke and his great fleet were indeed lying at Spithead, waiting to

dash out at the first note of war. But the French, for reasons of their own, wished to leave the declaration of hostilities to England, and the Government still vacillated in spite of the ardour of the Duke of Cumberland, Anson, and Fox. The fears of a French invasion increased. Bonuses were granted by towns and corporations to recruits for the army. Lotteries were instituted, and four millions sterling was in a short space raised by these means. Wolfe puts his patriotism into practical form, for he urges his father to spend money freely in lotteries, and should the need arise, to devote the greater part of his small patrimony to the service of the Government, and without interest if necessary. Let enough only, he asked, be reserved to buy a little land, so that his mother, in case of the worst, should not actually want.

In 1756 Wolfe with part of his regiment spent some weeks at Devizes. Tradition still points out an old tavern, tucked away in a bye-street of that ancient Wiltshire town, as the quarters of the conqueror of Quebec. His stay there is only notable for a remarkable letter written to a member of the Townshead family, in answer to one asking his advice on a course of reading for a young relative about to enter the army. It is significant that Wolfe, as a comparative stranger, should have been appealed to from such a quarter. The long list of ancient and modern authorities on military tactics and history which he recommends, and the familiarity with which he touches upon each work, give some idea of his own studies. He does not omit his favourite branch of mathematics. "Without a sound knowledge of this," he tells his corre-

spondent, "a soldier can never have a proper knowledge of the construction, the attack, and the defence of fortifications."

The abandonment of Minorca by Byng now stirred up the country to wrath with that ill-fated admiral, and to open war with France. This was declared on the 18th of May 1756. The agitation preceding the trial and death of Byng lasted all through the summer; and Wolfe in his cramped quarters at Devizes, groaning over this fresh disgrace to the country, insists that the culprit deserves no mercy. But in the autumn he was ordered off to Stroud to quell riots among the Gloucestershire weavers. He found himself once more among a nest of Jacobites, for the Duke of Beaufort, whose influence was paramount in the district, was devoted to the Stuarts. There was little, however, to do in Gloucestershire. Prospect of foreign service seemed as far off as ever; so Wolfe, cut off even from news of what was going on, resigned himself to his position, sent for his guns, and enjoyed the sports of a district whose natural attractions he describes with some enthusiasm.

Things have rarely looked darker for England than when at this moment Pitt stepped to the helm. French ships were eluding our navy and pouring men and supplies into Canada, while our movements in America were timid and ineffective. The Duke of Cumberland was trying to protect Hanover with a mixed army of German mercenaries, and with the King of Prussia was opposed to half Europe. Frederick, wholly occupied with the Austrians, won a victory over them at Prague, but ultimately retired beaten on Kolin, while the Russians were ravaging his territories. Pitt, full of great thoughts,

was averse to shedding any more English blood in alien causes on unprofitable battlefields. Cumberland, therefore, left alone with an inferior army of mercenaries, and without the consolation of even a handful of his own British troops, was crushed by the French: Hanover was abandoned; and the Duke himself, the idol of his soldiers, and by no means unworthy of their respect, returned to England a disgraced man, retired from public life, and soon afterwards died.

Pitt in the meantime saw that France herself, in the absence of her armies, was vulnerable. He determined to strike a blow on her coasts, and instantly set about his preparations. Great efforts were made to equip for purpose of transport Hawke's fleet, which had been for so long lying at Spithead; a land force of ten thousand men was collected in the Isle of Wight, and Wolfe's old friend, Sir John Mordaunt, was appointed to the command. Pitt had not yet assumed that absolute independence in the selection of his instruments which distinguished him later. Sir John was the King's choice; he had been both a brave and active soldier, but was now too old for such responsible command. Second to Mordaunt came Conway, and next to Conway was Cornwallis from Nova Scotia, Wolfe's old colonel. Wolfe himself was highly gratified by the appointment of Quartermaster-General to the expedition, and the fourth place upon the staff in order of seniority.

Some six months earlier a great temptation had come in his way. The Duke of Bedford, then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, being an old acquaintance of his father's, offered him the two lucrative posts of Quartermaster and Barrack-master to the Irish forces. Wolfe had

never been quite free from pecuniary anxiety. He had been in command at home stations ever since the close of the last war, and though devoid of expensive tastes, had found a lieutenant-colonel's pay little enough for his position. His father had helped him ungrudgingly from time to time; but he was not the kind of man who liked to be beholden even to his parents if it could be avoided. When the Irish offer came there seemed no prospect of European service, and the post meant comparative wealth. He accepted it on condition that the King would grant him his colonel's commission. Wolfe had sufficient modesty; he had also quite sense enough to know that if he adopted the army as a profession he must accept the corrupt system which prevailed. If, for instance, a man of title or political connection were passed over his head he took no personal heed of the matter. But if one without any such claims, and of manifestly inferior merit or deserts to himself, were preferred Wolfe took a very high stand indeed. When Honeywood was appointed he would very possibly have left the army had not war been impending; when, early in this year, a second blow came in the succession of Kingsley to the command, it was followed almost immediately by the Irish offer. The latter position had always carried the commission of a colonel, and Wolfe, shy in any case of this sort of staff appointment, declared he would not accept it unless the King gave way in the matter of his promotion. This the King at last promised, and Wolfe accepted. Hardly had he done so when a battalion of his regiment and he with it was ordered to the camp in the Isle of Wight. A few weeks later he formally resigned the Irish appointment.

Wolfe's ardour for active service was at the same time accompanied with the gloomiest forebodings as to the capacity of the British army. He knew what Frederick and his Prussians were, both men and officers. He saw, too, in the French officers a professional ardour and intelligence that seemed to him to be wholly lacking in ours. We had, he thought, a few infantry regiments equal to the best in Europe; but for the mass, so far as discipline went, he entertained a profound contempt. And his opinion was no idle cynicism, for his own regiment was conceded to be the best disciplined in the British army, and for long after his death it preserved the pride and the traditions of his rule.

It was about the middle of July when Pitt decided upon this expedition, the destination of which was kept a profound secret. His energy astonished the sluggish officials. The date he named for the fleet to be in readiness caused the First Lord of the Admiralty to lift up his hands in despair, and protest that it could not be fully equipped in so short a time. Pitt quietly replied that if it was not, he would have his lordship impeached. That settled matters, and the business was accomplished within the time specified.

On the 6th of September the troops, still in complete ignorance of their destination, went on board. There were ten infantry regiments, a few horse, a large artillery, elaborate siege apparatus, and abundant stores. Nothing was wanting, as some wit said, but a general. They had been nearly a week at sea before it was known throughout the fleet that their object was the destruction of Rochefort, and if that should prove impracticable, any vulnerable part of the French coast that offered

itself was to be attacked. Wolfe knew that he was a bad sailor, but he now realised the full horrors of a long voyage to a man of his weakly constitution. After ten days on board the *Ramillies*, and tossing about for much of that time in the Bay of Biscay, he has not had one hour of health, and finds himself much the worst sailor on board the vessel. "If I make the same figure ashore," he writes, "I shall acquire no great reputation by the voyage."

On the 20th the fleet lay off the islands of Ré and Oléron. Between these was the entrance into the Basque roads, upon whose shores some fifteen miles apart lay the cities of Rochelle and Rochefort. The object of the English was to make their way into the roads so that they could attack the islands upon one hand or the cities upon the other. The possibility of the large Huguenot population of that district being lukewarm had something to do with Pitt's choice of it as a point of attack; but they did not answer his expectations. A dead calm delayed for forty-eight hours the entrance of the fleet into the roads. The country was thoroughly alarmed. Signal guns and bonfires were calling people to arms along the whole coast. At length a change of wind made an entry possible, though difficult. The small fortified island of Aix within the roads and between Rochelle and Rochefort was first point of attack. On the 23rd Captain Howe in the *Magnanime* led a squadron of five ships down upon the island. He worked his own ship and its guns with such skill and rapidity that the services of his consorts were not required, and the fort, with five hundred men in it, surrendered in thirty-five minutes. The dexterity

and despatch with which Howe managed the business called forth general admiration, and was the only bright feature in the whole of this miserable undertaking. Vacillation now reigned supreme among the chiefs of the expedition; nor was this mended by the apathy which, at the very best, the naval commanders regarded any military operations in which their assistance was required. Pitt's first challenge to the French was in strange contrast to the staggering blows he was afterwards to deliver in such rapid succession. Mordaunt did not know his own mind for five minutes together; Cornwallis was not much better, while even Conway, a much abler soldier, seemed infected with the timidity of his colleagues. The coast defences were growing stronger every hour. Wolfe saw that if a blow was to be struck not a moment was to be lost. He had no official share, of course, in the guidance of affairs: he had not yet actually received his colonel's commission; but he had known Sir John Mordaunt all his life, and got permission from him to make a reconnaissance of the coast upon his own account. This he accomplished, and brought back word that he had discovered a spot midway between Rochelle and Rochefort where a landing was possible. The suggestion was at once laid before the admirals and generals, and unanimously adopted. The pilots pronounced it practicable, and naval officers who had been despatched to take soundings returned only to endorse the opinion of the pilots. After wasting an entire day, however, a council of war declared the plan too dangerous. Their inaction was condemned subsequently by court-martial in England; worse still, it was condemned by them-

selves two days later, and orders were given to land the troops without delay. On the night of the 28th the boats were made ready. Some of them were actually filled with soldiers "in the best spirits," so Wolfe declares, "when, to the astonishment and disgust of all, the landing was countermanded, and they were ordered back to the ships." Further councils of war were called, but Hawke flatly refused to attend, and in a few days the luckless expedition set sail for England.

"We lost the lucky moment in war and were not able to recover it," writes Wolfe to his father on the 30th. "The whole of this expedition has not cost the nation ten men (though over a million pounds), nor has any man been able to distinguish himself in the service of his country except Mr. Howe, who was a great example to us all. We return to England with reproach and dishonour." Wolfe was wrong. One other man besides Mr. Howe, but only one, came out of that expedition with credit; and that man was himself.

The official inquiry which followed the return of the armament did nothing to clear the reputation of its leaders; but it brought Wolfe the commission he had been so long waiting for, and it placed him upon Pitt's list of those who were worthy of high command. The court of investigation kept him in London, or rather at his father's empty house in Blackheath, through most of the autumn. Sir John Mordaunt was tried by court-martial, but, much to Wolfe's relief, though he can say no word professionally in his old friend's behalf, was acquitted. Some of the English regiments had been encamped on the Isle of Aix for a few days; and there those gloomy anticipations of Wolfe regarding

their discipline had been amply fulfilled. They had got drunk, pillaged the churches, maltreated the inhabitants, and defied all the efforts of their officers to restrain them. They were full of spirit and courage, Wolfe says, and he hopes the late fiasco will not hurt it. "As for their discipline," he declares with scorn, "nothing can hurt that."

But better days were coming, and better men. Pitt had now determined to find the latter at any rate, and to bring matters in America to an issue between France and England. Wolfe, after a visit to his parents at Bath, was back at Exeter with his regiment, when, on the 6th of January in the new year 1758, an important summons caused him to hurry up to London with a rapidity little short of marvellous over bad roads and in the depth of winter. Leaving Exeter at five in the morning, he was at midnight groping his way over Salisbury Plain, and by noon was in London. Within the week he had been offered the post of brigadier in the army which was to be sent against the French at Cape Breton. Pitt's soaring spirit is sick of blundering generals and titled incapables. Sweeping precedent to the winds, and passing over whole columns of the army list, he has made his choice. Serious work has to be done; he must have men that can do it, and Wolfe is one of them.

CHAPTER VI

THE AMERICAN COLONIES

LITTLE idea had the thirteen jarring commonwealths that then fringed the Atlantic coast and constituted British America what momentous issues were involved in the struggle upon which they were now entering. It was not indeed till Braddock's beaten remnant went staggering back over the Alleghanies, and let loose upon the British frontier hordes of bloodthirsty savages in French pay, that the middle and southern colonies were really roused. It had taken a good deal to convince them that this apparently remote matter of French aggression beyond the mountains had any serious import at all. They had been inclined to look upon the whole thing as a political chimera, and to regard the danger as imaginary or exaggerated. Nor is it easy now, so accustomed is one to regard the United States as one country and its people as one people, to realise how great was the cleavage at this period between the various colonies.

To understand how it was that something under a hundred thousand Frenchmen could seriously threaten the supremacy of nearly fifteen times as many Anglo-Saxons, it is necessary to recall the conditions under which each nationality respectively lived.

The British colonies in the eighteenth century were a long, straggling line of isolated and practically independent commonwealths. Some were presided over by hereditary proprietors, some by the representatives of the Crown. All, however, enjoyed popular government in one form or another. Every colony had originally set up, so to speak, for itself, and grown from its own beginnings within boundaries jealously watched and preserved. Of each other they as a rule knew little and cared less. In the days of their youth they had sometimes come to blows, and even engaged in mimic wars. The differences of creed or character that had distinguished their origin had with time set a marked stamp upon each province, and drawn them still farther apart. In only one respect all were alike, and that was in the perennial feud that existed between the official head and the elected assembly of each colony.

This cleavage, however, was greatly modified in the group of New England colonies. Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, though under different governments, were more or less one people and usually capable of united action. They were of the same origin and the same type, followed the same paths in time of peace, and in time of war shared a common danger. With the French on one side and the Iroquois on the other, New England, headed by Massachusetts, had been compelled to organise and to fight. Her people were at that time, putting aside the actual frontiermen, by far the most military of the English colonists. They were indeed essentially men of peace, who made their living upon stormy seas and none too fertile farms; but when they saw that fighting was necessary

they fought well, and in comparison to the other colonies conducted their military affairs with spirit and system. Being thoroughly republican, their officers were elected by popular vote, to the hindrance in some sort of discipline; but they were earnest and practical soldiers according to their lights. They were capable of coming into the field several thousand strong, and showed as much courage as could be expected from a provincial militia. On more than one occasion they had even performed acts of daring and adventure. In 1690 they had attacked the redoubtable Frontenac in Quebec with a home-built fleet and three thousand men. In Wolfe's day, as we know, they had captured Louisbourg, the most important fortress in America. They were not equal in the field to trained French troops, or in woods to the Canadians; but some of their border-rangers were unsurpassed in skill and courage. In the arts of peace, in completeness of government, in education, the New Englanders, with a harsher climate and a poorer soil, were in the van of colonial progress. Intolerant, superstitious, and grasping, they were even then an unpopular people. Socially they were a country of yeomen, though not quite such a dead level of farmers, fishermen, and mechanics as is popularly supposed. There was always a strain of something higher,—a cultivated class of good origin that rallied from generation to generation round the universities of the colony, its law-courts and pulpits, rather than on the broad acres which gave the aristocracies of some other colonies a more defined existence. The loyalty of New England to the mother country had never been demonstrative. It was of a gruff, ungracious sort, which perhaps is no

wonder. With the French upon his flanks, however, the question of the New Englander's loyalty settled itself.

Next to New England came the great province of New York. Unlike the former, which in blood was wholly English, the settlements on the Hudson were of a mixed character. Dutch was the basis; but a large and growing English stock had been grafted upon it since the annexation. The original settlement of the province had been on aristocratic lines. The Dutch "patroons" had been granted immense estates in consideration of planting upon them a sufficient number of tenants from Europe. These patroon families acquired wealth and great social influence. Even amid the commercial transformation and the immense prosperity and population that now fill the old Dutch province, their names still survive as honoured social landmarks, and as something that the Wall Street millionaire cannot buy.

Albany was in those days the limit of civilisation, the resort of the fur-trader, the gathering point of the soldier, the hunter, and the ranger. The province generally had little sympathy with New England, though she shared with her to some extent a common foe. What was Dutch was somewhat tinged with aristocratic notions; what was English was at least anything but Puritan.

Passing southward along the coast, and over the then unimportant and somewhat polyglot colonies of New Jersey and Delaware, the great province of Pennsylvania thrust itself across the line from the ocean to the wilderness. The chief feature of the dependency of the Penns, it is needless to remark, was Quakerism. Quakers, at any rate, were at this time paramount in

its councils, and what was not Quaker was chiefly German, dull, stupid, and often ignorant of the English tongue. Pennsylvania objected to war on principle. She was more than willing to share in the benefits of a peace made possible only by the arms of her sister colonies or the mother country. There were no people, indeed, so shrewd and so sharp in the pursuit of gain. There were no people whose quarrels with their governors —the descendants in this case of the man to whom their province owed its origin—were so pitiful or so paltry. But fight Pennsylvania would not, nor would she even contribute to the defence of those frontiers whose strength was necessary to her very existence. This was no piece of splendid Quixotism, of self-sacrificing devotion to a principle. In defending themselves the neighbouring colonies could hardly avoid at the same time defending Pennsylvania, and of this the astute Quaker and the thrifty German were well aware. Their safety was, moreover, guaranteed in another quarter. Into the great ranges of the Alleghanies, which intervened between them and the wilderness behind, thousands of Ulster immigrants had been throwing themselves since the beginning of the century, men who were as warlike as the low-country Pennsylvanian was the reverse.

Here, too, at the back of Pennsylvania, sprang into existence a physical feature which exercised an enormous influence on the events of the eighteenth century. The northern colonies were plentifully studded with groups and ranges of mountains, scattered over various parts of their surface. But in Pennsylvania these disconnected systems drew as it were together, and formed themselves into what may be geographically described

as a lofty wall, which, without gap or break, ran southwards, almost parallel with the ocean, till it reached the farthest limit of British settlement. Here, in the strip between the mountains and the ocean lay the five southern colonies, with the sea in their front and the blue peaks of the Alleghanies at their back. For a hundred years these had seemed to be the natural limits set by nature to the Anglo-Saxon settlements, and nothing approaching to pressure within such generous space had been, or for many years after Wolfe's time would be felt.

The most northerly of these southern colonies, and adjoining Pennsylvania, was Maryland. Founded as a Roman Catholic province, with the strange accompaniment of complete toleration, it had nobly kept to its ideal. Episcopacy, however, had now grown to be the prevailing one among its many creeds, and though there was some intermixture of other races, the colony was markedly English in manners, customs, and ideas. It imported negroes largely, and acquired, early in its history, the social features which made it rank then as now with the southern rather than the northern provinces. A little less pronounced and provincial, not quite so dependent on negro labour, rather more cosmopolitan than Virginia, it may, however, be classed with that ancient commonwealth about which a little more should be said.

What Massachusetts was to the northern colonies, Virginia was to the southern. The latter, with the exception of her mountain frontiers, was almost wholly English in population. She was, of course, the typically aristocratic colony, though few perhaps remember that in 1676 she had risen against the Crown, deposed her

governor, and done many violent things. That, however, soon passed away, and in the eighteenth century she was drinking heartily to Church and King, and had not long ceased to slit the ears of dissenters. In a hundred and fifty years of existence she had developed a country gentry, somewhat analogous to the lesser squirearchy of the mother country. African slavery and the importation of indented servants had stimulated the growth of large estates, and the wealthier landowners were sometimes sprung from the cadets of good English families. The Virginians cherished primogeniture and entail; they discouraged popular education; they rode races, hunted foxes, and fought cocks; they sat on their county benches, acted as vestrymen and churchwardens, and led lives, so far as circumstances would admit, much resembling those of English squires. There was a still larger yeomanry below them who were quite content with the state of affairs; and below these, again, came an ignorant and vicious class of poor and landless white men, that to this day, in the Southern States, presents a specimen of the Anglo-Saxon that has no equivalent elsewhere within the limits of the breed. Upon the whole, however, the Virginians were a manly, capable, and intelligent people. They flocked to the little court at Williamsburg, where a titled governor dispensed hospitality to the aristocracy of the colony; and with this long-suffering person they dined and danced, and conducted themselves with the utmost friendliness. In the legislature, however, they quarrelled with him as usual, only somewhat less persistently than did their neighbours in New York, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts. If inclined to be extravagant in private life, the Virginians

were the most penurious of statesmen. The people who held power in the low country had almost forgotten what Indians were like. They had never even seen a Frenchman, and his presence on the remote banks of the Ohio conveyed very little serious meaning to the comfortable squire on the James or the York. If the frontier was attacked, the hardy Ulster settlers, inured to Indian fighting, were there, a living barrier, which made even the most western plantations seem safe. If a few hundred militia were required, the burgess of Virginia, unlike the Pennsylvanian, would vote the men promptly, it is true, and, after a decent interval of wrangling with the governor, he would vote the money. In those combined expeditions, however, in which two or three colonies took part, the whole energies of their respective legislatures were absorbed in watching lest a man or a sixpence more than their share should be contributed. It will be readily understood, then, how hopeless would any attempt of vigorous and combined action on a great scale have been among the colonies south of New England.

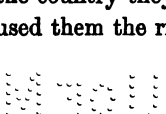
Next to Virginia came North Carolina, which may be briefly described as a rude reproduction of its neighbour. It was large in area and population, but the roughest in customs and manners, the most turbulent, and intellectually the darkest of all the older States.

South Carolina even then, and to a much greater extent later, differed materially from both North Carolina and Virginia. Like the latter it was dominated by a land-owning and slave-owning oligarchy; but the oligarchy of South Carolina grew in time to be smaller and wealthier, its masses became poorer and more numerous, in proportion than in any other colony. The

larger landowners were not so much country gentlemen who hated towns as in Virginia, but planters who spent a considerable portion of the year in their capital of Charleston, a city which, on this account, was at the time of the revolution regarded as perhaps the foremost upon the Continent in the matter of intellectual and social elegance. The estate of the wealthier South Carolinian was not so usually his home as was that of the Virginian or Marylander. It was often, particularly when rice was the product, unhealthy. The owner worked upon it large quantities of negro slaves under the management of overseers, while he himself, living chiefly at the city which was both seaport and capital, saw to the consignment and shipping of his own crops. English blood and English ideas predominated in South Carolina, though the Huguenots constituted a large and important element in the population.

Georgia, the youngest and the last of the southern colonies, was too undeveloped at the time of the French wars to need any comment.

The Ulster settler of the Alleghanies has been already mentioned, for without his rugged figure the ethnology of colonial America would be entirely incomplete. Early in the century the Scotch colonists of Ulster commenced that notable exodus which continued till the revolutionary war. To their stubborn industry the north-east corner of Ireland owed its transformation from a wilderness to a garden; their valour and their loyalty had more than once saved the island to the British Crown, and their reward was the treatment of pariahs in the country they had created. Their Anglican allies refused them the rights of citizenship. Their landlords



refused to renew their leases upon living terms. Never, even in Ireland, was there such suicidal policy. Shaking the dust of an ungrateful country off their feet, a hundred thousand of this sturdy Presbyterian yeomanry crossed the Atlantic in twenty years. To the Irish peasant of to-day much is forgiven on the strength of that land-hunger with which he is popularly supposed to be consumed; yet of all emigrants who land at New York he is the most reluctant to face the prairie and the forest. Very different was it with the Scotch-Irishman who, passing at once through the crowded towns and thicker settlements, made straight for the wilderness. He was above all things a pioneer, and a pioneer in those days meant a hunter and a soldier as well; and when the days of pioneering were over, his descendants, remaining on the lands that he had won, became a bye-word for success in the paths of peace as he had been in those of the chase and war.

At this time, however, the Alleghanies had not yet been crossed. All along their eastern slopes and in their troughs, from Pennsylvania to Georgia, were scattered the lonely clearings of the Ulster men and those of kindred spirits who rallied round them. Here, far in advance of civilisation, a sinewy, fearless line of fighting farmers held a frontier six hundred miles in length against the most formidable and ferocious savage warriors which that or perhaps any time has seen. Their settlements crossed the western boundaries of five colonies, but they were not in effect Pennsylvanians, Virginians, or Carolinians. They were beyond the reach of laws and customs, and took neither one nor the other from the respective colonies within whose parallels they might

happen to lie. They were a race to themselves, Scotch-Irishmen, Borderers, Over-mountain Men; and something like them may still be seen to-day in the wild uplands of West Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee. Superb woodsmen and fighters though they were, for distant expeditions they were unavailable. They secured safety to the peaceful colonies behind them, and before the century closed had fought their way over the Alleghanies into the Ohio valley; but to distant service in the French wars they could not, and probably would not have gone.

Such in outline was British America at the critical period that brought Wolfe across the Atlantic. How little fitted for prompt and combined action such an extended line of independent States must have been is obvious enough, even if their aggregate strength had not been still further lessened by the keen jealousies and general ignorance of one another which prevailed.

Let us now turn to the French in Canada and see how infinitely better situated for making war they were.

Canada at that day consisted of a line of scattered settlements, stretching along both banks of the St. Lawrence, from the frontier town of Montreal to the capital city of Quebec, and from Quebec for some hundred miles or so down the noble river. The colony was governed absolutely by the King, and in the main for the King. His viceroy had wide powers, but he was directly accountable to his sovereign. He was aided and watched by an intendant, a kind of legal adviser who was also in the confidence of the King. Thirdly, there was the Church, which within its limits, and sometimes without them, was also absolute. Between these various authorities there was more often than not discord; but fear of the King,

and hostility to the English colonies and the hated creed they represented, proved stronger in times of danger than even the fierce internal jealousies which raged at the council-boards of Quebec.

The population was less than a hundred thousand, dwelling under the feudal laws of old France. The whole country had been apportioned out in seigneuries, whose fronts faced upon the river, while their back lands lost themselves miles away in the uncleared forests. The seigneurs themselves were of mixed origin, like the Virginian aristocracy. Some were the descendants of officers, members of the lesser noblesse in France, others of successful pioneers of low birth who had been granted Canadian patents of nobility. A few, again, were of the latter class, without the not very solid privileges of the caste distinction. The seigneury was the unit in which Canadian life was centred. Upon the river frontage of each one stood the mill, the mansion, and the church. To right and left of these visible emblems of authority stretched the log-houses of the peasants, each standing upon the edge of its own long, narrow strip of holding. Perched upon his rocky throne in the Chateau St. Louis at Quebec, sat the grand seigneur and lord of all, the King's majesty in the person of his viceroy, absolute, unquestioned in his power and might. For purposes of war this was quite as formidable as it sounds; in a domestic sense it was not nearly so beautiful. With a few exceptions the seigneurs were miserably poor, so poor that on several occasions the King had been compelled to send provisions and clothing from France to keep his transatlantic nobility from perishing of cold and hunger. The rents paid

for the rude, half-cleared holdings were almost nominal, and sometimes were not paid at all. There was no export trade in food-stuffs. With a rigorous climate, indifferent soil, and a wretched system of agriculture, the Canadian farmer barely raised enough for the support of the country. More often than not the seigneur, besides his unprofitable acres, had little but his title, his sword, and his technical rights to distinguish him from the peasant. On both the demands of the Church fell with heavy and inexorable hand. The Church of Canada had indeed taken such a prominent part in the acquisition and settlement of the country that its demands both for tribute and for power seemed in its own eyes to be amply justified. Its bigotry was ferocious. The Huguenot exile, whose sturdy industry might have written the name of France across half North America, and altered the course of history, was repulsed from Canadian territory as a wolf or a New England Puritan.

Immense pains were taken to convert the Indians to the Romish faith, and to maintain them in the practice of its outward forms. No men had ever dared more splendidly, or suffered more unflinchingly for their religion than had the pioneer priests of Canada; but by the eighteenth century the spiritual results seem to have been barren enough. Crowds of Indians hung round the skirts of civilisation, carrying crucifixes and telling their beads. Beyond this they had no more conception of the Christian virtues than those still unknown savages who hunted the buffalo over western plains beyond the reach of the boldest white man. They fought, however, for the French, and indulged when occasion offered, and often under the

very eyes of their impotent pastors, in every cruelty and barbarity that the Indian code was familiar with.

The great feature of Canada was not its farms and its peasantry, but its fur-trade. This was the revenue which made the colony so valuable to the King, and in whose manipulation his corrupt officials grew rich and prospered amid the surrounding poverty. The fur-trade occupied perhaps a third of the inhabitants of Canada. It bred a whole army of hardy, fearless woodsmen. It bred also an ambition whose range soared far over lakes and woods, and took ken of half a continent, while the English colonist was absorbed in his county or his township. The French officials cared little for industrial settlement; the monopoly of the wilderness with its skins and furs was everything to them. Their trading-posts had been pushed to limits so remote that the imagination staggers at the very thought of what their solitude and isolation must have then been. West and north-west, over the wild district which is now the fertile province of Ontario, the trapper passed and repassed with active, tireless step. The trackless forest and the seething rapid were alike to him. Rocking in his birch canoe on the ruffled waters of Lake Huron, stealing through the countless islets of the Georgian bay, flying with headlong speed over the foaming turmoil of the Saulte St. Marie, there were few waters, from the stormy ocean of Superior to the quieter streams of his own St. Lawrence, that had not felt the stroke of his nimble paddle. The forest was the paradise of every young Canadian, gentle and simple. Into its vast, mysterious solitudes they loved to throw themselves, free for the time from the drudgery

of the plough, the watchful eye of the priest, the restraints of the law, and with the chance of making money that would be all the sweeter for being illicit. No better militia for forest and for stockade-fighting ever existed than these brave, hardy, ignorant backwoodsmen; and every able-bodied man in Canada, peasant and hunter, was by law a militiaman. When the King's viceroy decided upon war there were no legislatures to be consulted, no supplies to be voted. The King found the money and gave the word to march; and when the trumpet sounded the great majority of those who answered its call were only too glad to go.

Besides the militia a considerable force of colonial regulars, or Troops of the Marine, and some regiments from France, were maintained in an effective state in Canada; while the governor of the colony, unlike the indifferent politicians and effete courtiers that presided over the British possessions, was usually a soldier of capacity. Lastly, it was natural enough that a European race who were ever ready to strip themselves naked, paint their bodies, and fling themselves into the war-dance with their Indian neighbours, should find it easier to win their confidence than the stolid, unbending British yeoman across the border. With all these advantages it is not surprising that the French had been almost always successful in war with the raw battalions of tradesmen and farmers that formed the sole defence of the English colonies. Nor is it surprising that the vain-glorious French Canadian considered himself the equal of half a dozen Englishmen, till Wolfe came to teach him better.

CHAPTER VII

THE FIRST CAMPAIGN IN AMERICA (LOUISBOURG)

PITT'S plan for the campaign of 1758 was to strike the French in America a vigorous and simultaneous blow at three separate points. Beyond the Alleghanies Braddock was to be avenged, Fort du Quesne to be captured, and the line of posts which the French had established as a barrier to our western progress was to be snapped in its centre. The forts on Lakes George and Champlain, which commanded the chief inland route from the British colonies to Canada, were to be taken and occupied. Lastly, the great naval station and fortified town of Louisbourg, on Cape Breton Island, was to be recovered. The latter was the Halifax, and more than the Halifax of the eighteenth century. It commanded the mouth of the St. Lawrence, and dominated the North Atlantic. Within its spacious harbour great fleets could ride safely at anchor, while walls and bastions of solid masonry and bristling with cannon frowned over the misty seas.

Nor did Pitt propose merely to curb the French pretensions to western monopoly, or even to narrow the limits of the territory on the St. Lawrence which was legitimately theirs. His intention was to seize

Quebec and to drive them from Canada and from the Continent. To this end the capture of Louisbourg as well as of Ticonderoga and Du Quesne was the first step.

The command of the expedition to Du Quesne was given to Forbes, a Scotch soldier of merit and bravery. In the matter of Ticonderoga Pitt apparently yielded to the prejudices he had so ruthlessly trampled under foot. Lord Loudon, the late commander-in-chief in America, he had recalled with scant ceremony. Abercromby, a veteran of slight reputation, was next in rank, and to him Pitt conceded the command of the large force that was to march from Albany to the Lakes. The great minister felt himself safe in this, for with Abercromby he took very good care to send one of his own men, the young Lord Howe, considered one of the best officers in the British army. The expedition to Louisbourg was felt to be not only the most important, but the most delicate of these operations,—the most important on account of the great strength and commanding situation of the place itself, the most delicate from the fact that it was a combined movement by sea and land. Hitherto English admirals and English generals had cherished little love for one another. A great jealousy existed between the two services. The complete harmony and perfect accord which in these days is taken as a matter of course had no existence in those, when a sturdy mutual antipathy was a feature that all war ministers had to take into account. On more than one occasion soldiers and sailors of rank and fame had found their professional prejudices stronger than their patriotism.

Commanders in both services had now to be found who could be trusted to put the glory of their country

above every earthly consideration, and Pitt found them. Boscawen was entrusted with the fleet. Amherst, then a colonel serving in Germany, was placed in command of the army. With him there were to be three brigadiers; two of these, Laurence and Whitmore, had proved their worth, were already in America, and had the advantage of transatlantic experience; the third was Wolfe.

Pitt had not only an unequalled genius for selecting the men most capable of serving him, but the courageous contempt for bad traditions which enabled him so successfully to exercise it. He had also, above all English statesmen, the power of inspiring every man whom he called to aid him with his own indomitable spirit. Patriotism so long slumbering awoke. The merchant at his desk, no less than the colonel at the head of his regiment and the captain on the deck of his ship, felt the magic influence. The pulse of England began to beat with a vigour for long years unknown. Corruption slunk, if not out of existence, at any rate out of sight. The baser machinery of English political life, hitherto considered indispensable to government, was tossed contemptuously to Newcastle, who understood it thoroughly and understood nothing else. Everything that was best and most virile in the nation responded to the overmastering genius of the man who was to lift England from gloom and despair and defeat to the first place among the nations of the world.

Wolfe at any rate required no rousing. He would have preferred, indeed, some share in the great operations on the Continent. How infinitely greater was the stake to be played for in America, he perhaps, unlike Pitt, did

not see; but if he did, he was after all a soldier, and the battlefields of Flanders and Germany had naturally more professional attraction than the backwoods of America. Such preferences, however, were soon forgotten in his gratification at this mark of Pitt's confidence. The prospect of weeks at sea, every day of which he knew would be misery, is only referred to with a passing grimace, as it were, in his delight at the prospect of action. The only thing that troubled him upon his own account was the state of his purse, already sorely drained by the expenses of one expedition, and now again to be heavily taxed. Anxiety of a graver sort also clouded the young soldier's exaltation, for he would have to leave the old general, his father, in such failing health that it was doubtful if they would meet again; and his mother, too, though she long outlived both husband and son, was at this time extremely ill. Now, too, comes the first and almost the only allusion in Wolfe's own hand to Miss Lowther, the young lady who later on was to inspire him with an affection which, if not so ardent as his earlier one, was at least not unrequited. It is here, however, but a passing jest to his mother about her "fair neighbour in Bath," and the additional stimulus he will have in the path of glory in order that she may deign to recognise him when he returns; from which obvious banter we may take it that Wolfe was neither engaged nor had any serious thoughts that way before he sailed for Cape Breton.

The force destined for Louisbourg consisted of about eleven thousand men, and was assembled at Portsmouth, a place which the new brigadier anathematises as "a perfect hell upon earth for soldiers." By the 19th of

February the army was embarked, and the whole fleet of line-of-battle ships, frigates, and transports sailed from the Solent. Buffeted by heavy gales it laboured down the Channel, and was driven into Plymouth harbour by a storm that strewed the coast with wrecks. Amherst was to follow; Wolfe was therefore the senior officer on board, and for nearly three months the unfortunate soldiers, many of them in transports not registering two hundred tons, and their still more unhappy brigadier, lay tumbling and tossing amid the Atlantic billows. Two other fleets had been despatched, but for naval purposes only. One was to watch the French fleet then fitting in Toulon with troops and supplies for America; the other, under Hawke, was to perform a like office off Rochefort, where a similar armament was preparing to make a dash for Canada. At both points the French were foiled; at Toulon they could not get out, while at Rochefort they were driven on shore.

It was the 10th of May when Wolfe and the British fleet, forty sail in all, entered Halifax harbour. Here the troops were to await the arrival of Amherst, and to receive some small additions from the American garrisons and the New England militia. On the 28th the *Dublin*, with Amherst on board, arrived off the coast, and the whole armament putting out to sea bore away for Louisbourg. For two days under clear skies they ran before a light breeze along the iron-bound coast of Acadia. Scattered on the third day by a gale, they once more collected, and on the 2nd of June, racked with sea-sickness, but with ardour unquenched, Wolfe saw looming through the fog the dark outlines of the strongest fortress in America, and the

rocky headlands and pine-clad shores which form the long sweep of the Bay of Gabarus.

When the Isle of Cape Breton, or Isle Royal—the northern promontory, in fact, of Nova Scotia—was annexed by the French after the death of Louis the Fourteenth, the famous fortress of Louisbourg, the "Dunkirk of America," had been built careless of expense. It was the key of Canada, the connecting link between that country and the French West Indian possessions, the safe refuge of armed ships that were to fight the English cruisers in the northern seas and the merchant navy which had already sprung up in the New England colonies. Upwards of a million sterling had been spent upon the fortifications, which measured a mile and a half in circumference; the best engineers and the most skilled workmen had been employed in its construction; the lime for the mortar, and some even of the very stone itself were said to have been brought from France. In 1745, however, the garrison had been caught napping by a New England force under Peperall and Warren, and the town had been taken. At the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, three years later, the French had insisted on its restoration, and though it will be remembered that one old veteran had vowed that he would sooner give them Portsmouth, the point was yielded amid the grumblings of those conversant with the politics of the North Atlantic.

A town of four thousand people, a big place for the period and locality, had grown up under the protection of the massive ramparts and frowning cannon. Officials, clerics, merchants, and fishermen were there herded together between a desolate wilderness and a dreary sea;

and now a garrison of three thousand regulars besides Indians were added to a population of which every able-bodied man carried arms. All through the winter French vessels of war carrying men and stores had been running the gauntlet of the watchful English battleships. Some, indeed, had been intercepted and taken, but the fogs which are ever drifting over the surface of those cold gray seas prevented anything like an effectual blockade, and the masts of seven line-of-battle ships and five frigates were visible in the harbour as the British fleet bore down upon the coast. By these means three thousand sailors were added to the garrison, which, with a year's provisions, and nearly two hundred and fifty cannon and mortars in position on the walls and batteries, besides those of the ships, might fairly count on a successful resistance.

The harbour of Louisbourg is an almost landlocked basin of some seven or eight miles in circumference. The distance between the two promontories, which guard its entrance, is somewhat less than a mile, and in the centre of this narrow channel lies Goat Island, at that time strongly fortified. On the southern promontory, between the sea and the harbour, pressed, as it were, within a triangle and protected upon two sides by water, lay the town completely surrounded by fortifications. These were, naturally, most strong upon the base of the triangle, which stretched from the still waters of the harbour within to the surf of the Atlantic without, and protected the town from the only possible approach by land. Four bastions—the Princess's, the Queen's, the King's, and the Dauphin's—with their connecting curtains here seemed to bid defiance to any ordinary force. In

addition to these artificial defences, the craggy and surf-lashed shore, stretching for miles to the southward, afforded a natural security which was now further increased by the erection of redoubts in every spot where a daring enemy might venture to attempt a landing. The place itself, though a centre of military and clerical life, and a busy seat of traders and fishermen, was a strange oasis. Upon one side of it beat the surging, ice-laden seas; upon the other lay an illimitable wilderness of forest and marsh, of rock and river, where the abomination of desolation was only broken at long intervals by the war-whoop of the Micmac or the camp-fire of some straggling band of outlawed Acadians. Seawards, it is true, the Louisbourg citizen had at times a more stirring outlook, for there, in the offing, the white wings of the British ships were for ever coming and going. Sometimes the booming of big guns far out in the squall or the mist would remind the anxious burghers how the quarrels of Europe were being fought out in that wild waste of waters. Often, too, some friendly sail with the flag of France flying at her masthead would come panting in for refuge, while the seaward batteries fired wildly at long range on the stubborn Englishman as he sullenly gave up the chase and went about. More than once within the last twelve months the people of Louisbourg had seen with relief the menacing squadrons of Britain caught in the very nick of time by providential gales, and dashed out of sight far over the face of the whirling waters.

Now, however, there was the enemy in force lying just out of cannon-shot, and the great French fortress saw that it would have to fight for its existence. And

yet, even at this eleventh hour, the storms that had so often saved Louisbourg seemed as if they had heard the call of the simple priests, and simpler fishermen, who said masses in the wooden chapels on the shore, and never doubted that the Almighty looked upon heretics with eyes as ruthless as their own. From the 3rd to the 8th the wind blew so hard that a landing was impossible. Wolfe, once more miserable with sea-sickness, but oblivious of everything when fighting was on hand, joined Amherst and Laurence in a sloop, and coasting the shore they eagerly scanned the cliffs and coves, now white with surf, in search of a landing-place. Having satisfied themselves regarding the only feasible spots, and the wind dropping somewhat, they decided to make the attempt; but when the wind fell the fog rose and baffled them. On the 6th both wind and fog abated, and the troops were actually got into the boats, but the gale freshening, once more the attempt had to be abandoned.

In the meantime the French had been straining every nerve to fortify all possible landing-places for some miles southward of the town. At each of these points there were masked batteries of heavy cannon and swivels, and defences of felled trees laid with their branches outwards, a crude palisade easily constructed in the American forests, but immensely formidable.

On the night of the 7th the sea abated, and by two in the morning the troops were once more in the boats. Three points of attack had been selected, but the surf still spouted in columns from the sunken rocks and leaped high up the face of the cliffs. The final decision rested with the admiral, Boscawen. It was not this time from any want of accord with his generals that he hesitated, but

the venture really looked very dangerous. The admiral consulted his captains, and they also doubted, all but one grizzled, fighting veteran who strongly urged the attempt. Perhaps the disastrous councils off Rochelle combined with the memory of his last interview with Pitt to determine Boscawen's decision. At any rate it was given in favour of immediate action. The points of landing were nominally four: Freshwater Cove four miles westward of the town, Flat Point and White Point considerably nearer, and Lorambec on the east or farther side of the harbour. The three last, however, were to be only threatened by Laurence and Whitmore. The actual attack was to be made at Freshwater Cove, and for the command of this Wolfe seems as a matter of course to have been chosen.

At dawn of day the guns of the fleet began to open on the shore, and under their cover Wolfe with his fleet of boats rowed rapidly for the breakers. He had with him twelve companies of grenadiers from the First, Fifteenth, Seventeenth, and Twenty-Second regiments, a picked corps of light infantry, a company of New England Rangers, and a regiment of his old friends, Fraser's Highlanders.

As the boats neared the narrow cove the batteries opened on them with effect so deadly that Wolfe signalled to sheer off. The mast that carried his signal flag being almost immediately cut in two by a round shot, the order was either not seen, or was disregarded by three boats commanded by subalterns who were sheltered by a projecting cliff from the fire of the guns. These pushed straight for the rocky ledge bounding the left of the cove, and the impetuous youths who commanded

them steered their boats right on to the rocks, and leaping with their men on to the surf-lashed ledges began scrambling towards the shore. Wolfe saw that they were out of reach of the cannon, and hastened to support them. The sailors rowed with a will through the hail of bullets and grape-shot, and in a few minutes the leading boats, among which was Wolfe's, were grinding upon the rocks. Some were instantly stove in: a few men were actually drowned; but headed by their young general, who leaped into the surf with a cane only in his hand, the grenadiers and Highlanders, wet and bruised, but forgetting everything in their ardour, swarmed over the slippery rocks towards the broad beach of the cove. Here, under a galling fire, Wolfe rapidly formed them as they came up. In five minutes he was strong enough to charge the nearest French battery, which he carried at the point of the bayonet. This spirited attack left the other end of the beach open for Amherst and the rest of the troops to land without resistance; and as the whole command advanced up the heights the French, precipitately abandoning their intrenchments, fled in disorder through the two or three miles of forest that separated them from Louisbourg, leaving some hundred and twenty dead and wounded behind them. The pursuit was hot through the forest, but when the open ground commanded by the guns of the fortress was reached, it was deemed prudent to call a halt.

During the next few days, amid surf and fogs, the camp equipage, stores, and cannon were with considerable difficulty brought on shore. Just out of cannon-shot of the town a small stream wound its way between

low wooded hills to the sea. Along this valley, and hidden from the sight of the garrison, lay the English camp, while between the scrub-covered ridges that fronted it and the batteries of the town was a rough, broken plain divided in the middle by a marsh. The harbour, it will be remembered, lay on the farther side of Louisbourg, and upon different sides of this two batteries of the enemy had been noticed. A brilliant glare in the midnight sky told the English that one had been abandoned and fired; but a more formidable one still remained upon Goat Island, dividing the narrow entrance of the harbour. Wolfe, with twelve hundred men, was at once dispatched by Amherst to occupy the point upon the east of the harbour's entrance, erect a battery there, and destroy the one upon the island. The necessary march of some six or seven miles was accomplished without opposition. Some small batteries were established on the northern and western shores of the harbour, and Wolfe at once set about the more difficult task of erecting one upon Lighthouse Point.

Within the harbour lay eleven French battleships carrying five hundred and fourteen guns. The admiral, who had always disliked the situation, had been anxious at the first approach of the enemy to sail out and save his ships. Governor Drucour, however, a determined and able man, would not hear of it; and much ill-feeling was thereby generated between the two branches of the French service cooped up in the town and harbour of Louisbourg.

Wolfe, though greatly delayed by bad roads and scarcity of sawn timber and soil, has his last and chief battery in position by the 20th. He writes frequently

to Amherst, exulting in the fact that his men are now so well intrenched that the fire of the enemy's ships and batteries is almost harmless. As for the ships, he so far agrees with their captains as to think they "are in a confounded scrape." For nearly a week the firing across the harbour is hot and heavy, and the ceaseless roar of big guns and mortars shakes the desolate coast. Wolfe enjoys the work amazingly, toils indefatigably day and night, and in brief intervals of rest reports progress to Amherst in lucid and graphic letters that might serve as a model even in these days of highly-educated officers. The only thorn in his side is a company of New England Rangers, who, having been illegally supplied with rum, will persist in making too free with it.

By the 26th the island battery was silenced. A night or two previously a frigate had slipped out of the harbour under cover of a fog, and made for Quebec in quest of aid. In two days, however, she sailed into the Bay of Gabarus with a British crew on board and the English ensign flying at her peak. A sudden panic thereupon seized the French admiral that the English fleet might enter the harbour and destroy him. To avert such a catastrophe he sacrificed half his ships, sinking them during a dark night in the narrow strait which guarded the entrance.

Wolfe, having finished his work on the harbour side, now betook himself to the main body of the army, who had been quietly pushing forward their trenches from the landward side. These had been advanced to within range of the great batteries flanking the western walls of the town, which now turned on them the whole force

of their fire. The red-coated infantry, however, still crept onward, working like navvies, night and day, cutting and piling fascines, erecting block-houses, and fortifying every hillock and post of vantage. Amherst's value lay in the patience and thoroughness with which he did such work. He left nothing to chance, though in truth he seemed to some, and to Wolfe among them, to be too cautious and slow at times when vigour and dash were urgently needed. Wolfe had already cast his eye upon Quebec; a vigorous effort on Louisbourg, even at a little sacrifice, he thought, would make a campaign up the St. Lawrence possible this summer. Amherst, however, was not to be hurried, nor is there any proof that Wolfe attempted to hurry him, except by the personal ardour he displayed in his own department. So the batteries on both sides kept up their ceaseless roar, and while Louisbourg was already beginning to suffer greatly from shot and shell, the British, protecting themselves by pick and spade as they advanced, lost comparatively few men.

This dogged work was occasionally enlivened, however, by more thrilling incidents, and Wolfe, who was in the front of the lines the whole time, was the central figure in most of them. Now he is on the right, busy in the trenches, when a sortie from the town dashes on his position. This he not only repulses, but at the same time pushes his battery so much more forward that his play on the town seems to have stung the French into some complaints, for he writes to Amherst: "When the French are in a scrape they are ready to cry out on behalf of the human species. When fortune favours them, none more bloody nor inhuman." We find him

again busy on the same side, that nearest the sea, throwing up yet another and more advanced redoubt. The French have marked it as the most formidable of all our positions, and one that at all hazards must be destroyed. A sortie, nearly a thousand strong of picked troops, pours out of the covered way in the dead of night and makes a tremendous onslaught on the works. Wolfe is ready for them with the grenadiers he led through the breakers at Freshwater Cove. The struggle is a stubborn one, the fiercest of the siege, and the loss on both sides heavy. The English are at first driven back fighting desperately with the bayonet, but they are rallied, the French repulsed, and the redoubt retaken. An English officer relates that the French were "shamefully drunk," but this is as may be.

This took place upon the 9th of July, when only three weeks had elapsed since the landing of the stores and siege-trains. Such vigour on the part of the English in American warfare was unprecedented. Slowness and apathy had hitherto, according to French ideas, distinguished all their military movements on the Western Continent, and these ideas had been more or less justified. No such shock of arms had before been felt upon American soil. Half a century of skirmishing and scalping, burning and raiding, had accounted for thousands of human lives and a hideous record of human suffering, but this was war on a greater and more generous scale.

Drucour sends to Amherst, under a flag of truce, a message that he has a skilful surgeon in Louisbourg, to whose services any wounded British officers are welcome. Amherst returns the courtesy by letters and messages

from French prisoners in his hands, and a present of pineapples from the West Indies to Madame Drucour, who acknowledges the compliment with a basket of wine. But the cannons and mortars roar none the less loud for these amenities, and Madame herself, a perfect Amazon among women, is constantly on the ramparts encouraging the soldiers and even pointing the guns.

One French frigate, more daring than the rest, maintains its station at the western corner of the harbour nearest to the English lines, and galls them continuously with her fire. Beaten at last into silence by the advancing batteries and torn by shot, her valiant captain repairs damages as well as he can, makes for the open sea, and creeping through the British fleet under cover of a fog, bears away for France to tell them how serious things are looking. There are only five French ships now left in the harbour; the crews of those sunk at the entrance, and of most of the others, have joined the garrison, to the open dissatisfaction of the soldiers.

A day or two later four hundred Canadian Rangers and Indians burst from the woods upon the British flank, but are easily repulsed. One more dash forward is made by the British, headed as usual by Wolfe, who, driving off the French resistance, opens a new parallel two hundred yards from the walls. On the 21st a shell falls on the ship *Célèbre* and sets her on fire. The few men on board cannot fight the flames, and she drifts, a sheet of fire, into the *Entrepenant* and the *Capricieux*. A tremendous conflagration ensues, and to prevent its extinction the whole fire of the English batteries is turned on the blazing ships, which, drifting ashore amid

the random booming of their own guns, are burned to the water's edge.

On the 22nd a shell fell through the roof of the citadel, containing the governor's house, chapel, and quarters for men and officers, and set fire to it. Brave efforts were made under a hot fusilade from the besiegers to save the building, but with only partial success. The next thing to catch fire was a big pile of wooden barracks that the New Englanders had erected during their occupation. No attempt was made to save this under the tremendous hail of round shot, grape, and bombs that the English gunners poured into the blazing building. It had been the chief quarters of the garrison, who were now forced to seek shelter and rest in the streets or under the ramparts.

One more performance, two days later, closed the record of this famous siege. Two French ships yet remained afloat in the harbour. The English sailors, who had hitherto been passive spectators, thought they now saw a chance of striking a blow for their own credit. Six hundred blue-jackets accordingly rowed in under the fire of the town, and overpowering the feeble crews of the *Bienfaisant* and the *Prudent*, sent them on shore. The latter ship, being fast in the mud, was set on fire, and the former towed to a safe anchorage under the English batteries.

The French were now at the last gasp. A fourth of their number were sick, the remainder had no place of refuge left in which to lay their heads. There was not a house in the place, said a French officer, that had not felt the power of this formidable artillery. In thirty-six hours, he reckoned, twelve hundred bombs had

fallen into the town accompanied by the fire of forty pieces of cannon "served with an activity not often seen." The English trenches had been pushed almost up to the very walls. The masonry of the ramparts, already loosened by the continuous fire of over two hundred French cannon, was toppling down under the terrific hammering of the English guns. Provisions and ammunition were running short. On the 24th only four French guns were feebly answering the roar of Wolfe's batteries. On the 26th the last was silenced, and there were breaches in the works large enough to admit of an assault.

Drucour had nothing for it now but to capitulate. He called a council of war, and the feeling that there was no alternative being practically unanimous, an officer was at once despatched with a flag of truce to ask Amherst for terms. He had not to wait long. "The garrison must surrender unconditionally as prisoners of war, and an answer given within an hour, otherwise the town will be at once carried by assault." The rigour of the terms took the French officers aback, and they sent their envoy to Amherst once more to ask for less humiliating conditions. But the English general refused even to see him and repeated his demand, requiring an answer within half an hour. Drucour replied that Amherst's ultimatum could not be considered. At this point, however, the citizens, who fully expected some rough usage in return for the atrocities committed in previous years by the French Indians, besought Drucour to consider the hopelessness of resistance. This settled the matter, and before the last messenger had reached the English lines he was overtaken by another bearing the news of an unconditional surrender.

At eight o'clock on the following morning the English army marched into Louisbourg, and the English flag was hoisted over the half-demolished town. The French were drawn up on the parade ground, and as the dismal formalities of surrender, so humiliating to brave men, were gone through they flung down their arms with tears of rage and vexation. The defence had been a most gallant one, and the English officers seem to have shown the utmost consideration for their defeated foes, Madame Drucour in particular being the object of most marked and flattering attention.

The duty of enforcing order and preventing outrage on the part of the victorious British soldiery devolved in a large measure on Wolfe, and was performed promptly and efficiently. Having made an end of his labours, he at once exchanged his sword for his almost equally ready pen, and sat down to his long interrupted correspondence. He tells his mother that he has just been in to pay his respects to the French ladies "who, poor things, are pale and thin with long confinement in a casement, and very badly frightened, but none of them hurt." To his father he gives a brief sketch of the siege, and to his uncle he writes in the free and critical vein that always distinguishes his correspondence with that venerable warrior. He is disappointed that they did not cut off a part of the enemy from the town on landing, speaks of the Indians as "dastardly, bloody rascals," thinks Amherst not quite vigorous enough, and is of opinion that they should push right on for Quebec, "and end the campaign in a single season." To his mother he breaks out in a singular vein of prophecy:—"North America will some time hence be a vast empire—

the seat of power and learning. There will grow a people out of our little spot, England, that will fill this vast space and divide this great portion of the globe with the Spaniard, who is possessed of the other half. It is my humble opinion that the French name may be rooted out, if our Government will follow the blows they have given and prosecute the war with the vigour it requires."

A French fleet had been totally destroyed, five thousand six hundred and thirty-seven French soldiers and sailors made prisoners of war, and two hundred and forty pieces of cannon, together with a large supply of arms and stores, had passed into the hands of the victors. In the middle of August the prisoners were sent to England, and the great majority of the inhabitants forwarded in British ships to France. In a few years Louisbourg had practically vanished from the map of America; in truth it is hard, in these days, to realise what an important place it once occupied in the eyes of European nations struggling for Western Empire in the eighteenth century. Few even of Canadians or Americans have ever seen the quiet old fishing-village which, far removed from the beaten tracks of commerce or travel, still slumbers amid the surf and fogs of the northern seas. Its fortifications were levelled after the peace; and in the place of busy street and roaring battery there is nothing to be seen now but grassy mounds and moss-grown heaps of masonry. Here, amid the silence of a sheep-pasture, where stood of old the Dunkirk of America, the rare visitor may listen to the boom of the Atlantic and find ample food for reflection upon the mutability of human things.

CHAPTER VIII

PREPARATIONS FOR THE SECOND CAMPAIGN

GREAT were the rejoicings in England when the news arrived of the capture of Louisbourg. All the bells of London burst into joyous peals, and as the mail-carriers pushed their way through southern harvest fields and over northern moors, a thousand country steeples rang out the glorious tidings. In and around the great city bonfires reddened the sky, and on the 7th of September the captured colours were borne in solemn procession to St. Paul's. It was the first great victory in America, and the fact of its announcement following within a few days that of the fatal blunder of Ticonderoga, accounted no doubt for some of the enthusiasm it kindled.

Wolfe and Amherst as yet were ignorant of this same business of Ticonderoga, and it was as well they were. Wolfe knew nothing in Abercromby's favour, though, with Pitt, he felt that wherever the brave Lord Howe was present the honour of England was safe. But the gallant young soldier, beloved as much by the colonists as by his own men, had fallen in the very hour of need, and left his feeble chief to stumble into murderous disaster. "The noblest Englishman that has

appeared in my time," says Wolfe, who knew Howe well, "and the best soldier in the British army."

He had not heard of his friend's death and of Abercromby's shameful retreat, when he sat down to write to his parents about the capture of Louisbourg. By the 7th, however, the news has arrived at Cape Breton. "Heavens," writes Wolfe, "what a loss to the country! the most intelligent man among us!" He begs of Amherst to hasten either to Quebec or to Abercromby's assistance. As to the former enterprise, however, the sailors seem to be extremely shy of navigating the upper St. Lawrence, at which Wolfe chafes mightily in his private letters. Most of the spare troops from Louisbourg are to go with Amherst to Lake George, where Abercromby is brooding over his late performance amid the sullen looks of his fourteen thousand surviving soldiers. Wolfe is anxious to go, but he hardly realises what an absurd disproportion of force there already is between the brave Montcalm, with whose exploit France and Canada are ringing, and his incompetent opponent. Otherwise, if there is to be no Quebec this season, he would like to return to England and recruit his shattered health, which, now that the excitement of action is over, is beginning to show how greatly the last six months of sea-going and fighting have enfeebled it. But other and most uncongenial work has been cut out for him. He is ordered, with three regiments and a fleet of seven ships under Sir Charles Hardy, to spread fire and sword and a general terror amid the French settlements of the lower St. Lawrence. This expedition seems also to have been intended to alarm the garrison of Quebec, and deter

them from sending troops southwards to the assistance of Montcalm. Hating the work, but without a murmur, Wolfe sailed upon his task. Anything he undertook he did thoroughly, and swallowing his repugnance he burned and harried those lonely French villages which, nestling under the sublime heights of Gaspé, still even to this day fascinate the traveller with their romantic isolation.

Wolfe and Hardy are not long about their business. The former soon reports with grim brevity that his work is done, and with suggestive shortness of speech remarks that the armament was out of all proportion to the sorry but necessary business for which it was intended. Referring to the dread of the upper navigation entertained by the naval commanders, he says that he has at any rate taken care that they and he shall be acquainted with the lower reaches, and only hopes that "by next season the neighbourhood of Quebec will be equally familiar."

Abercromby's was the only blow of the campaign that failed. Frontenac, where the city of Kingston now stands upon the Canadian shore of Lake Ontario, was a great French post. It was the link between older Canada and its western wilderness, a fort, a trading station, and a vast storehouse; and Frontenac had fallen. Bradstreet, with three thousand colonists, had made a fine dash through the northern forests, carried his force over Lake Ontario, seized the fortress with everything it contained, and thus by one bold stroke cut New France in half. Wolfe, so chary of praise, and with the feeling towards volunteers that was natural to such an ardent disciplinarian, is delighted with Bradstreet. These rapid, daring actions stirred him to enthusiasm. Writing to Amherst, now at Lake George, in the familiar strain

his friendship with that general justified, he begs him to assume a bold, aggressive policy as the most effective in such a war. Fort du Quesne, the fourth point Pitt struck at, also fell before a large force of Highlanders and provincials led by the gallant Forbes. Little honour, however, was reaped in this expedition except by the courageous leader, who went through most of it on a litter in the agonies of a mortal disease aggravated by the wettest autumn ever known in America. Bradstreet had, in fact, conquered Du Quesne at Frontenac; and the French, after inflicting a serious repulse on the enemy, found themselves obliged to abandon a position from which it might have proved no easy matter to dislodge them.

Wolfe left Louisbourg for England early in October, and landed at Portsmouth on the 1st of November. He had been gazetted to the colonelcy of the Sixty-Seventh regiment; and it is rather surprising to find "the hero of Louisbourg," as many called him, quietly taking up his new command at Salisbury, and waiting there for leave to go to town. Wolfe's part in the late victory was a matter of common talk. Amherst was still in the wilds of America, and his brigadier both personally and officially represented the successful leadership that a few weeks previously had set all England wild with bells and bonfires. Before the end of the month, however, he was with his parents at Blackheath, attending to his father's business and his own, writing letters, and suffering much in health. He only now learned that Pitt had intended him to stay in America, and at once hastened to put himself right with the great minister. Such a course was probably unnecessary, as Wolfe had

gone to Louisbourg on the private understanding that he should return for the winter, and Pitt's plans for his retention in America had not arrived when the young brigadier sailed for home. Wolfe, however, was greatly disturbed lest Pitt should misunderstand his movements, and attribute them to any lack of zeal for the service, and he at once wrote a letter to the minister which after events have made a somewhat memorable one. He declared himself quite ready to serve in America, and "particularly in the river St. Lawrence," if any operations were to be carried on there, asking only in such a case for time to repair his broken health, that he may do himself and his country justice when the moment for action arrives. To his friend Major Rickson, at the same time, he confesses that, if he consulted his own inclinations, he would prefer Germany, where his old regiment, the Twentieth, was waiting to distinguish itself at Minden. He has told Mr. Pitt, however, that he may "dispose of his slight carcase as he pleases"; racked though he is both with gravel and rheumatism, he would "much rather die than decline any kind of service that offered."

Pitt soon showed that there was no misunderstanding on his part. Wolfe was taking the waters at Bath when the minister summoned him to London to receive the command of an expedition that was to be sent against Quebec in the spring. Before Christmas Day he was back again at Bath, and amid the mental anxieties incidental to the approach of a great campaign, found time strangely enough to fall in love.

Miss Lowther, sister of Sir James Lowther, the first Lord Lonsdale, had been at Bath when Wolfe was there

with his parents before sailing for Louisbourg; but there is no evidence that he was then seriously struck with her. Now, however, he seems to have succumbed very rapidly to her charms. Of his first unhappy affair plenty of evidence is extant in his own handwriting; but of this one no details whatever survive except that the young lady, captivated either by her lover's person or his fame, accepted his advances, that an actual engagement took place, and that Wolfe throughout his last memorable campaign wore her miniature round his neck. Indeed, the latter fact, and a letter written to Wolfe's mother after his death by Miss Lowther, and now in the collection at Squerryes Court, are practically all the evidence we have of this brief and melancholy affair. There can have been little leisure indeed for courtship, for in six weeks, in the February, that is to say, of 1759, he was to embark for America, and in the meantime he was busily occupied with the approaching campaign and his invalid father's affairs. The course of waters, combined with that perfect rest which was Wolfe's only hope of health, was now impossible; he gave up the attempt in despair, and returned to London in as wretched a state physically as when he landed at Portsmouth. He was, in truth, more fit for the hospital than the head of an army, but his indomitable spirit overcame his sufferings and he never flinched for an instant. In the work of organisation and detail, which made possible his final victory at Quebec, he was as indefatigable as in the last scene upon the Plains of Abraham he was daring.

Wolfe was now in frequent communication with Pitt. A stipulation that he should be allowed to choose his own staff was met by the minister with hearty sympathy.

The prejudices of the King, who at least was a soldier, might be troublesome; but the corrupt machine over which Newcastle presided was infinitely worse. The phalanx of incapables, who by rank or interest filled most of the lucrative posts in the army, had deeply resented the audacious innovations of Pitt, and even Pitt could not wholly ignore them. Wolfe, however, was determined if possible to have around him only men upon whom he could rely. He urged that if so great a responsibility as this command were placed upon the shoulders of so young a man he should at least be allowed to choose his assistants. The difficulty was, fortunately, not insuperable. The dignity and the pay (especially the latter) of military appointments appear to have been what the old crew chiefly hankered after; for active service they seem to have been less eager. If these young upstarts of Pitt's were content with glory and hard knocks, well and good. But the idea of substantial rank and the pay attached to it being conferred upon young men solely on account of their merits seemed to threaten the very foundations of the British Constitution. Wolfe, therefore, the commander-in-chief of an army destined to conquer a great country and humiliate the most powerful nation in Europe, remained in substance only a plain colonel. The rank of major-general was conferred upon him temporarily, to be held only in America; his three brigadiers, Monkton, Murray, and Townshend, took service upon the same conditions of brevet rank. The malcontents were thus quieted, nor is it probable that the humour of the thing suggested itself for a moment to their minds as it does to ours.

Wolfe, however, cared little for these things so long

as he was free to choose his own officers in his own command. On this point he was firm, even against the King himself. He had been anxious to have his friend Carleton (afterwards the well-known Sir Guy), then a promising young officer of infantry, with him at Louisbourg; but the King had refused, owing to some remarks Carleton had made depreciatory of his Majesty's Hanoverian troops. Wolfe, knowing his ability, was now determined to have Carleton as quartermaster-general, and told Pitt so. Again, however, the royal pen was drawn through the objectionable name when the list was submitted for approval. Wolfe now begged the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Ligonier, to plead with the King on the subject; his Lordship did so, and failed to move him. With rare pertinacity Wolfe held out, and Pitt, seeing the point he made of it, good-naturedly pressed the matter in person, using the argument that if a general was not allowed to select those to serve immediately under him, he could hardly be held fully responsible in case of failure. The King at last gave in, and Wolfe got his man.

The financial side of the question as affecting himself personally gave Wolfe some little concern. The pay of a commander-in-chief in active service was £10 a day. But Amherst technically filled that position, and Wolfe, though with an independent command, would be only entitled to the £2 a day of a major-general. He recognised that as chief of an army this would be utterly inadequate, and with some diffidence he sought an interview with Lord Barrington, Secretary of War. To him he frankly stated his want of private means, and the consequent embarrassments of his situation, adding

that, if it was absolutely necessary, he could borrow money of his father. Barrington, who declares that "Wolfe's modesty touched him," procured a special grant of £500 from the Government for his official expenses.

The old friend, too, of his boyhood, George Warde of Squerryes, now a rising cavalry officer, Wolfe had begged to accompany him. But Warde, in spite of his sincere regard for his friend, not unnaturally as a horse-soldier preferred the battlefields of Europe, whither he was shortly sent, to the siege of an American fortress howsoever important. That Wolfe's urgency in this matter was due to something more than friendship, may be assumed from the fact that Colonel Warde afterwards rose to be one of the most distinguished cavalry officers in the service.

Wolfe's own view of his appointment is expressed in a letter written at this time to his uncle in Dublin, his chief confidant in such matters. "I am to act a greater part in this business than I wished or desired. The backwardness of some of the older officers has in some measure forced the Government to come down so low. I shall do my best and leave the rest to fortune, as perforce we must when there are not the most commanding abilities. If I have health and constitution enough for the campaign I shall think myself a lucky man. What happens afterwards is of no great consequence." And this is the man to whom a tendency to gasconade has been attributed by certain writers of biography. The temptation to qualify a character and a reputation so exceptionally pure by some touch of human weakness is perhaps not unnatural; but this supposititious tendency

has its only derivation in a single anecdote related by Lord Mahon in his history. By any one who has read Wolfe's private correspondence, extending as it does almost from his cradle to his grave, this anecdote, would be, we think, at once rejected as impossible. It may be well, however, to give it here for what it is worth.

Pitt, desirous of a final interview with Wolfe, invited him to dinner a day or two before he sailed, the only other guest being Lord Temple. The General is represented, though partaking sparingly of wine, to have worked himself in the course of the evening up to such a state of excitement that he drew his sword, rapped it on the table, and flourishing it round his head talked in melodramatic strain of the great things it was to achieve. After Wolfe had left, Pitt is represented as lifting up his hands and eyes, with the exclamation, "Good God, that I should have entrusted the fate of the country and the administration to such hands!" Lord Temple is responsible for the tale, which came to Lord Mahon at second-hand after a lapse of many years. But Temple was notoriously inaccurate, and ready, moreover, to tell any story that would make against Pitt. It is just possible that a momentary burst of enthusiasm on Wolfe's part may have given some sort of foundation for the highly-embroidered legend; and Temple, it may be added, was not the kind of man to understand a nature like Wolfe's. The story is, in short, absolutely incompatible with everything we know of Wolfe's character, and of this we know much from his own lips. It is true he was considered in some quarters a fanatic in his profession. Newcastle, for instance, could not understand him at all, and told the King that he was mad. "Mad,

is he?" was the prompt reply. "Then all I can say is, I hope he'll bite some of my generals."

Upon the 17th of February Admiral Saunders, in command of the fleet that was to operate with Wolfe against Quebec, sailed out from Spithead. Only a few, however, of the troops which were to compose the expedition were on board. The greater number were collecting at Louisbourg and Halifax from the various garrisons in America, and towards these two ports frigates and battleships and transports, loaded with men and munitions of war, were slowly ploughing their way from various points over the wintry seas. On board the admiral's ship, the *Neptune* of ninety guns, lay poor Wolfe, facing once more, at the worst season of the year, with his sickly frame and enfeebled constitution, the terrors of the deep. And now, while the British squadrons are labouring with adverse winds in the troughs of the Atlantic for near three months, let us turn for a moment to the condition of the country which is awaiting their attack, and to Pitt's plan of campaign.

The English minister, though supporting the war in Europe by large subsidies of money and some British troops, was making America his great point of attack. It was there he intended to conquer France, while adding at the same time a vast territory to the British dominions. To drive the French out of Canada was the task into which he now threw himself with all his might. They had already been driven from the maritime provinces. With the fall of Fort du Quesne their influence south of the great lakes, once so threatening to the Anglo-American communities, had been annihilated. Ticon-

deroga still remained in their hands, but its days were manifestly numbered. Frontenac was in British possession and, garrisoned by colonial troops, cut off the main colony of Canada from her own west of which the fortified post of Niagara was the capital. Pitt was again attacking the French on three sides. Amherst, with the army which Abercromby had so fatuously mishandled, was waiting in the province of New York for the opening of spring to capture Ticonderoga, and march northward over its ruins. Another force was to operate on Lake Ontario, seize Niagara, and paralyse the whole western trade of France. The third, and the greatest of these efforts, was the formidable task upon which Wolfe was bound.

Within the royal colony signs of collapse were beginning to be visible. A dogged, loyal, hopeless valour alone remained. The Indians, on whose help the French had always so greatly leaned, were wavering as they invariably did waver in a declining cause. The Iroquois, always passively inclined towards the English, had now begun to exhibit more active sympathy. At the seat of government councils were divided. The Marquis de Vaudreuil could not, even in the face of dangers so grave, put aside his insane jealousy of Montcalm. Bigot the Intendant, and the third of the triumvirate, who with the Catholic hierarchy governed Canada, lived only for corruption, and with a wretched crew of parasites battened on the country's misery. The poverty of the province since the English successes of the preceding year had become deplorable. The peasantry, ground between the incursions of the English in the gulf, the exactions of military service, and the goadings of the Church, were

showing for the first time a marked distaste for war. They had to fight, for they were practically soldiers by law and peasants only in the intervals of the strife; but the spirit that hitherto had animated them was now failing. In several districts men had to be raised by force or intimidation, where formerly the sound of a bugle or the unfurling of a flag was sufficient to stir their martial ardour. Moreover, English blunders in former years had caused the Canadians to think themselves invincible; and at that time, according to the accounts of the French officers who commanded them, the Canadians were the most vain-glorious people under the sun. In 1758, however, this self-confidence had been rudely shaken. In the battered ruins of Louisbourg, in the smoking villages of Gaspé, in the British cannon now grinning from their own fortress of Frontenac, in the abandoned ramparts of Du Quesne, in the thousands of French soldiers sent captives to England, they seemed to see the writing on the wall. Hitherto the English had been regarded rather as objects of plunder; they had now assumed a new attitude and become objects of dread. The priests thundered from the pulpits that the wrath of God was justly punishing His people for their sins. This was unfair, for the peasant who devoutly knelt Sunday after Sunday in the parish churches that even then dotted the river banks from Three Rivers to Quebec, and from Quebec to Cape Tourmente, was as profoundly respectable in his own way as the most Puritan of his New England neighbours. If the clergy, on the other hand, had levelled their anathemas at the official crew in Quebec their language could hardly have been too vigorous.

Vaudreuil, a Canadian himself, laboured with a wealth of skilful fiction to keep up the courage of the people. Montcalm, hating the country, wearied of his long banishment, but staunch, true, loyal, and untainted by the corruption around him, tried to do his duty,—as gallant a French gentleman and soldier as ever lived, fighting in a hopeless cause, and surrounded by scoundrels united only in their attacks upon the reputation of a man who despised them and whose shoes they were not worthy to unloose.

France had been importuned again and again for reinforcements; but France was hard pressed at home, and perhaps the English battleships and cruisers whose sails flecked the North Atlantic had some deterring effect on the French ministry. Only a pitiful contingent of four hundred men found their way to Quebec, though, what was more important to the half-starved colony (for the harvest of 1758 had failed), a convoy of provisions and ammunition made its way up the St. Lawrence in the spring. "A little is precious to those who have nothing," remarked the philosophic Montcalm, as the ships bearing the weak battalion and the more acceptable supplies dropped anchor in the basin of Quebec. The same convoy informed him of the British designs, and brought instructions for him to concentrate all the forces possible at Quebec, and to hold the city at all costs. "We will save this colony or perish," was Montcalm's laconic reply, and he kept his word. "But what a country," he added, "where all the knaves grow rich and honest men are ruined!"

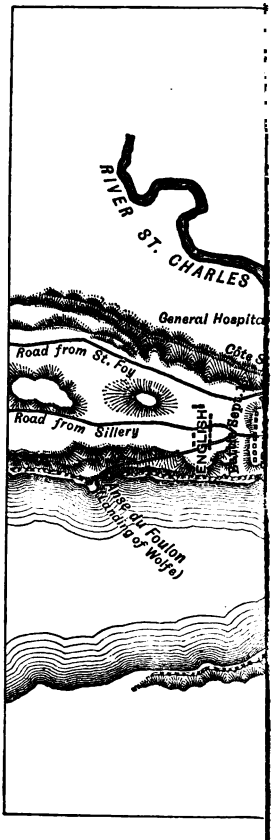
All the available forces in Canada were called out in the spring of 1759 for the defence of the country. In due

course thirteen thousand militia and some twelve hundred Indians, besides three thousand five hundred French and one thousand five hundred colonial regulars were under arms along the frontier. It is only, however, with Quebec that this story has to do, and at Quebec Montcalm gathered the great bulk of his forces, which by the time the English army arrived under its walls was, besides Indians, at least fifteen thousand men, about a third of whom were regulars. The hope of the French was to defend the colony till peace was declared in Europe. There was a strong feeling in many quarters that England was not really anxious to annex Canada. Some men, looking into the future with a clearness that time has justified, gave her credit, as they said, for more wisdom. Neither this, however, nor the straits to which Canada was reduced, can in any way detract from the glory that was to be Wolfe's. It fell to him to attack one of the strongest fortresses in the world with an army but little more than half as numerous as the one which lined its apparently impregnable defences. Fortunately that little army was one of rare courage and discipline, and was commanded, moreover, by a man whose like the French in America had never yet seen, nor had Englishmen served under since the days of Marlborough.

CHAPTER IX

THE SECOND CAMPAIGN IN AMERICA (QUEBEC)

THE force now gathering at Louisbourg, of which Wolfe was to take command, consisted of ten regiments or battalions, besides grenadiers and rangers. In the first brigade under Monkton went the Fifteenth, Forty-Third, Fifty-Eighth, and Seventy-Eighth regiments, more commonly known then as Amherst's, Kennedy's, Anstruther's, and Fraser's (Highlanders) respectively. The second brigade, commanded by Townshend, comprised the Twenty-Eighth (Bragg's), the Forty-Seventh (Lascelles's), and the second battalion of the Sixtieth or Royal Americans. In the third brigade under Murray were the Thirty-Fifth (Otway's), the Forty-Eighth (Webb's), and the third battalion of the Sixtieth. In addition to these there were three companies of grenadiers from the Twenty-Second, the Fortieth, and Forty-Fifth regiments, and a corps of light infantry from the Louisbourg garrison. Of colonial troops there were six companies of rangers, for the most part newly raised. The full complement intended for the expedition was twelve thousand men; but a force of two thousand that was to have come from the West Indies was counter-ordered, while some of the battalions from


RIVER ST. CHARLES
General Hospita
Côte S
Road from St. Foy
Road from Sillery
ENGLISH
Anse du Foulon
(Landing of Wolfe)

the American continent fell short in numbers. The actual strength of the force that sailed up the St. Lawrence with Wolfe, including several hundred marines and artillery, was just under nine thousand men. The three brigadiers were all good officers, Monkton and Murray in particular. Townshend had some talents and much bravery, but was of a queer disposition, and inclined to presume somewhat on his social rank and powerful connections.

It was early in May before Wolfe and Saunders sighted the coasts of Nova Scotia. Fogs were drifting over the shaggy headlands, and great fields of ice were still grinding southwards along the rocky cliffs. Louisbourg harbour was still frozen, and the British fleet had to make for Halifax, where they were joined within a few days by the ships carrying troops from the American continent and from the remoter forts upon the Acadian coasts. Day after day, through the rifts in the chill fog, the outlawed Frenchman and Micmac hunter, skulking in the wilderness between Cape Sable and Chebucto, could see the white sails of frigates and transports hurrying northward to join the English armament. On board the latter among others went the Forty-Third regiment, overflowing with delight and buoyant with the first taste of liberty after two winters spent in detached and lonely posts along the Bay of Fundy. Isolated from the world, without books, short of provisions, and deprived even of the solace of sport by the French and Indian scalp-hunters that haunted the forests up to their very gates, the gallant Major Knox gives a vivid picture of their curious exile in the invaluable journal for which all students of this war must be eternally grateful.

In a fortnight Louisbourg was open, and both fleet and army were collected in its still ice-strewn harbour. Knox tells us how eagerly he went on shore, and with what interest he surveyed the havoc made by the British cannon in the preceding spring. Wearied with the monotony of the wilderness, he looks with delight on the busy stir of armed men crowding the ships and marshalling on the shore. He was just too late to see Wolfe review the grenadier battalions of the Louisbourg garrison. These picked soldiers had been put through the intricacies of the new exercise, and called forth the highest encomiums from the critical young chief. Colonels of other regiments, says Knox, whose isolated situations during the last twelve months had prevented them from drilling their men in the new tactics, looked forward with no little alarm to their turn for inspection, and begged the general's indulgence. "Pooh, pooh!" said Wolfe. "New exercise, new fiddlestick! If the men are otherwise well disciplined and will fight, that's all I shall require of them." The utmost care was taken to weed out sickly or unlikely men from the active list. Wolfe's orders display the greatest anxiety that no preliminary detail touching the efficiency of his little army should be overlooked. All defects in arms and clothing were made good. All the troops, or almost all, were veterans; every regiment, except Bragg's and the Sixtieth, had been with Wolfe at the capture of Louisbourg, and the grenadiers were picked from the force still garrisoning the city. His letters breathe a happy consciousness that he has got both men and officers upon whom he can entirely rely. It is true he had not yet seen Quebec, and knew not what manner of place it was.

Scarcely an officer, indeed, in the British army had actually gazed upon the capital of the Canadas. Nor did he know that Montcalm was awaiting him there with nearly double his own force. "If valour, however," he cheerily writes to Pitt, "can make amends for want of numbers we shall succeed." It was at this moment, as the regiments were pouring into Louisbourg, that he received the news of his father's death. It is characteristic of the man that, besides the letters of affectionate consolation which he naturally wrote to his mother, he should in this hour of domestic sorrow and professional anxiety have written to his agent to keep up the annuities to his Irish relatives, who had no sort of claim upon him beyond the precedent of his father's spontaneous generosity.

Admiral Durell with ten ships had started for the St. Lawrence early in May to intercept if possible any reinforcements or supplies from France. It was the 1st of June when Admiral Saunders, carrying Wolfe and his army, weighed anchor at Louisbourg, the troops on board rending the air with their shouts as ship after ship cleared the bar. By the 7th they were hugging the bleak coasts of Newfoundland, still white with the snows of an exceptionally severe winter. On the 11th they were sailing well together beneath the gloomy, cloud-capped heights of Gaspé. Scudding with all sails set before a favouring breeze, they passed Anticosti, and soon left in their wake those hundred miles of rugged island wilderness before which civilisation, from that day to this, has always shuddered and passed on. By the 29th the wind had failed them, and where the great waters of the Saguenay, breaking from the mountain

ranges of the north shore, pour their huge volume into the mightier depths of the St. Lawrence, the becalmed ships suffered much and ran considerable risk from the strong cross currents.

Among the French at Quebec there seems still to have been a feeling that the navigation of the St. Lawrence by a great English armament was almost impossible. When Bougainville, who had been sent to France to beg for reinforcements, returned just in time to warn Montcalm that an English armament destined for the capture of Quebec was actually on the seas, "the people were astounded," says a native chronicler, "and filled with alarm at an enterprise that seemed so bold." English soldiers, from the French point of view, might be wanting in dash: English generals might or might not be bigoted blunderers; but for the successors of Drake and Hawkins all things were possible.

Nearly all the troops of the colony had been gathered in and around Quebec. Day after day from its lofty ramparts anxious citizens and eager soldiers gazed eastward over that unequalled panorama of mountain and forest and river, straining their eyes for the first flutter of a British ensign against the fresh summer drapery of the mantling woodlands. The excitement and suspense, as may be imagined, were extreme. Before the end of May some of Durell's ships had reached the Isle aux Coudres, eighty miles below the city. A party had been sent to harass them, and had captured on the shore three young midshipmen whose ardour had exceeded their discretion. These young gentlemen, thinking, no doubt, that the only fun now possible for them was to frighten the French by a little gasconade, exaggerated our forces after

a wonderful fashion, and sent the excitement in Quebec up to fever heat. In the meantime the English were slowly advancing. A French pilot of good birth, Denis de Vitré, had been captured at sea, and impressed under pain of being hanged. Near Isle aux Coudres, too, where the pilots were usually taken on board, a French flag was run up, and the simple villagers, taking the fleet for a French one, sent their pilots out with great demonstrations of welcome. The mistake was realised too late, and the credulous navigators found themselves under pain of death stationed at the helms of their mortal foe. The most difficult passage of all on the river was the Traverse, between the lower end of the Isle of Orleans and the mainland. Here, on Captain Knox's ship, the poor French skipper, so helplessly coerced, blustered and stormed. Canada, he said, was to be the grave of the British army, and the walls of Quebec would be decorated with English scalps. An old weather-beaten tar, master of the said transport, had a glorious contempt for Frenchmen, and absolutely ignored the gesticulating pilot. Stationed in the bows with a trumpet in his hand he undertook the strange and dangerous navigation himself. Every one remonstrated. The French pilot swore they were all doomed. "Aye, my dear," replied the intrepid tar, "but d——n me I'll convince you that an Englishman shall go where a Frenchman daren't show his nose." "The pilot," says Knox, "asked me if the old seaman hadn't been there before, and on hearing that he had not, he lifted his hands and eyes to heaven with fervency." "The enemy," wrote Vaudreuil to his Government, "have passed sixty ships of war where we durs'n't risk a vessel of a hundred tons by night and day." There

was no backwardness this time on the part of the British navy in pushing forward an enterprise where the laurels would mainly fall on the rival service. What Boscawen had been to Amherst, Saunders was in every sense to be to Wolfe.

On the 26th of June the whole fleet were safely anchored off the southern shore of the Isle of Orleans. The latter, though but three or four miles wide, is over twenty long, and divides the St. Lawrence for the whole of that distance into two channels. Its upper end, immediately facing the city of Quebec nearly four miles distant, was then, as now, one of the most ornate and highly-cultivated bits of Lower Canada. Captain Knox notes with pleasure the windmills, churches, and stone farmhouses, and the well-tilled fields of flax, barley, wheat, and pease. Landing upon the upper point of the island, Wolfe saw the broad river stretch once more with an unbroken tide from shore to shore. Looking straight up stream it seemed, about three miles away, to contract into a much narrower channel; and upon heights at the entrance of this channel, upon his right as he faced them, rose above the heaving waters of the basin the towers and spires and battlements of the most Catholic city. The bravest heart might have flinched for a moment at the first sight of Quebec; but Wolfe was now too busy to write his impressions, and has not left on record his sensations on first standing face to face with the sanctuary of the French power in America. High up against the western sky, perched on its rocky throne, it must have frowned back something of defiance to his eager gaze. Then, still more perhaps even than now, it was unique among American cities,—a bit of old

feudal France thrust upon the New World, and grafted on a site that would have made beautiful even the Boston or New York of that day. Upon the slope of the great rock rose the gables of monastery and convent, the spires of church and cathedral; while above them all the rugged outlines of formidable batteries, bristling with cannon, broke the sky-line. Turning to their right, however, Wolfe and his officers saw a sight which was of even more immediate import to them than the city itself. All along the north shore, from the skirts of the town to where, some two miles eastward of the island promontory on which they stood, the Falls of Montmorency flashed in the sun, the French army lay as strongly intrenched as nature and art could make them. There had been much discussion among the French leaders as to their plan of defence. Above the city the line of cliffs, since made so famous by Wolfe's great exploit, seemed an impregnable barrier to the most audacious foe. Upon the other side of it, flowing in a south-easterly direction, the river St. Charles wound its way through flat meadows to empty itself into the St. Lawrence under the very walls of Quebec. The latter, therefore, stood in the apex, as it were, of an acute angle and protected upon two sides by water. The only approach to it by land was from the west along the high narrow ridge, which divided the St. Lawrence from the valley of the St. Charles, and was known as it neared the city as the Plains of Abraham. Montcalm had at first intended to make the St. Charles his line of defence; but he finally decided on occupying the long line of heights which stretched for nearly six miles along the shore, from the St. Charles to the wide chasm down which the Montmorency plunges in a surging tur-

moil of foam and spray. Here, along the Beauport shore, where high wooded ridges approach close to the water's edge, over fourteen thousand Frenchmen lay secure behind batteries and earthworks that time and energy had combined to make apparently impregnable. The French ships had been sent up the river out of harm's way, and their sailors had been landed to help in working the batteries of the town, where Montcalm had left about two thousand men as a garrison. It was scarcely considered possible that the English ships would attempt to force their way up the river past the guns of the city; but the few points above, where an attack by land was possible, were easily rendered secure by intrenchments and small bodies of troops.

Bougainville's opinion of Quebec a year or two previously was a significant tribute to its strength. "Three or four thousand men," said he, "could hold it against all comers." He did not think the English would attempt it, but "they might have the madness to do so." There were now not four thousand, but over sixteen thousand men waiting to defend it; but then the English, according to Newcastle, had a madman at their head.

Behind the miles of earthworks which fringed and overlooked the Beauport shore lay most of the strength of Canada. The white-coated infantry of old France were there; the regiments of Béarn, Guienne, and royal Roussillon, the blue-clad soldiers of the colonial marine, the militia from the seignories in homespun and hunting-shirts, and the trappers (*coureurs de bois*) well-nigh as wild and savage as the Indian, who in paint and feathers filled in the picturesque and striking scene.

Montcalm was there, of course, in person, and Vaudreuil, the Governor-General, and the skilful soldier, Levis, and the active Repentigny, and the Scotch soldier of fortune, Chevalier Johnstone, who had already fought against Wolfe at Falkirk and Culloden. He had now drifted out to Canada on Montcalm's staff, and has left us a record of his doings here as he did of those in the Scottish Highlands fourteen years before. It is somewhat strange that the same authority should speak to us from the past both of Culloden and Quebec; and whatever may have been the value of Johnstone's sword to Frenchmen or to Jacobites, for his pen we may in these days at least be grateful. De Ramesay, too, who was in command of the city itself, has left an exhaustive journal of the siege, and tells us how at this time he could see the tall masts of the English ships rising behind the Isle of Orleans, and the strange sight of redcoats swarming over the forsaken fields.

The first landing of the British troops was upon the Isle of Orleans, and there Wolfe received his first rebuff. For scarcely were the men on shore when a brief but furious summer storm, bursting upon the river, drove the ships from their moorings and cast several of the transports upon the rocks. The tempest, however, was soon over. The sun set behind the dark outlines of the city amid the crimson of a cloudless sky; and as the English soldiers, gay with the excitement of impending action, pitched their tents and lit their camp fires, the last ripple had died away from the surface of the angry river. The lights of the doomed city and the countless bonfires on the Beauport shore threw their red gleams far and wide over the silent waters, as night fell

upon a scene that was so soon to be one of stir and turmoil, of death and destruction.

The French were determined to lose no time. A fleet of fire-ships had been prepared at a great cost, and were lying, unknown to the English, beneath the guns of the French batteries. This very night, the first after Wolfe's landing, the British sentries, as they paced at midnight the rocky shore of the Point of Orleans, espied drifting towards them through the gloom the dim outlines of what seemed to be ships of war. They had hardly time to give the alarm before the nature of these mysterious visitors made itself abundantly evident. Suddenly, to the astonishment of the half-awakened soldiers, tongues of flame seemed to leap in a score of places out of the gloom, revealing a whole fleet of burning ships that, fed by pitch and tar, were in a few moments wrapped from their topsails to the water-line in one vast sheet of fire. As this whirlwind of flame bore down past the Point of Orleans towards the British fleet, the artillery with which each blazing hulk was packed began to open with terrific noise, and cannons, swivel-guns, and mortars crammed to the muzzle, bombs and grenades, and fireworks of every description, shook the very firmament with an appalling din. Shot and shell, bullets and missiles of all sorts, flew hurtling through the air, hissing in the seething waters, and crashing through the trees and tents on the Isle of Orleans. The British troops upon the Point lost their heads, and rushing back upon the main body, the latter flew to their arms in some confusion as if the enemy were upon them; and, indeed, the idea that this might be the case prevailed till the early dawn

of a June day broke to quiet their alarms. As for the fire-ships, the officer in command seems to have lost his nerve and applied the match too soon. They drifted onwards in the direction of the fleet, vomiting forth clouds of flame and smoke, staggering and even spinning round in the throes of their explosions. But the strength of these floating demons was almost exhausted before they reached their intended prey. With admirable gallantry the sailors of the fleet dashed out in boats to meet the dangerous invaders, and as soon as the wild cannonade had spent its force, threw grappling irons on the smouldering hulks and towed them harmlessly to shore. One French captain and six sailors had been accidentally burned alive in this futile venture. It had cost a million livres, and ended very literally in smoke. Montcalm had put little faith in it. Vaudreuil, however, who upon principle differed on every subject from his military coadjutor, strongly urged the attempt, and watched, it is said, its failure from the steeple of Beauport church.

Upon the next morning Wolfe published his first manifesto to the Canadian people. "We have a powerful armament," it ran. "We are sent by the English King to conquer this province, but not to make war upon women and children, the ministers of religion, or industrious peasants. We lament the sufferings which our invasion may inflict upon you, but if you remain neutral we proffer you safety in person and property and freedom in religion. We are masters of the river; no succour can reach you from France. General Amherst, with a large army, assails your southern frontier. Your cause is hopeless, your valour useless.

Your nation have been guilty of great cruelties to our unprotected settlers, but we seek not revenge. We offer you the sweets of peace amidst the horrors of war. England, in her strength, will befriend you; France, in her weakness, leaves you to your fate." These offers, however, were of little avail. Hereditary hatred counted for something, perhaps, with the peasantry; but still more efficient was the goading of the priests, who in this war were in truth no ministers of peace, frequently even leading their parishioners to battle. Most potent of all, however, were the threats of Montcalm, who not only vowed death to all who refused to serve, but held over every recalcitrant parish the terror of the Indian tomahawk.

The situation was calculated to fill Wolfe with something like despair. He spent two days in reconnoitring the French defences, and if such a gallant heart as his could have sunk it must then have done so. To attack such a position with but half the number of men that defended it may well have seemed an almost hopeless task. If Wolfe despaired, however, he never said so. He had set his heart on capturing Quebec; he knew that it was expected of him; he only wished, no doubt, that his English friends and masters could stand for a moment with him upon the Point of Orleans, and see the nature of the task they had set him.

Amherst was moving slowly and cautiously with a larger army than Wolfe's upon Ticonderoga. He had no longer the young brigadier at his elbow to stir him on. Good and thorough as he was, none knew better than Wolfe that rapidity was not one of his military virtues. Only a small force at Ticonderoga disputed

his steps; but small forces had ere now at that famous spot done wonders, and might do them again. Amherst would leave nothing to chance. When he had overwhelmed Ticonderoga, as he surely would and did, he had the long north road to Canada to face and overcome before he sighted Montreal and divided the army of Montcalm. Then only, it seemed, would be Wolfe's opportunity; but Wolfe doubted its coming before the winter put an end to all operations. To carry a large army several hundred miles through trackless forests and along half-navigable streams is a slow business for a leader who has not the genius for forced and rapid marches. Wolfe did not place much faith on Amherst's co-operation; and when a little later stray woodsmen and rangers came dropping in with news of the latter's progress he ceased to place any. It was now the last day of June. He had a little over three months in which to take Quebec, and he set himself to work upon his formidable task with a spirit undaunted at any rate, if not hopeful.

The troops were now all encamped upon the Isle of Orleans in mid-stream. Opposite Quebec, upon the southern shore where the river is narrowed to a width of less than a mile, rose the heights of Point Levi, which were occupied in uncertain strength by the French. Wolfe saw that, once in possession of them, he could batter the lower part of Quebec with his artillery, and he determined to occupy the post. Montcalm, indeed, had not failed to see this. He had been anxious to plant a strong force of men and guns upon Point Levi, and thus not only command both sides of the narrow entrance to the upper river, but prevent the

enemy from shelling the town. Vaudreuil and his friends, however, opposed it, maintaining that the English batteries, if planted there, could barely reach the fringe of the lower town, and would be harmless to its higher and more important quarters. That Montcalm's opinion was the correct one they were to learn to their cost. On the afternoon of the 29th Wolfe prepared to occupy Point Levi with Monkton's brigade. In a cold north wind and an unseasonable frost, part of the troops were landed before nightfall at the village of Beaumont on the south shore; the remainder followed in the morning. A proclamation was posted on the church door calling upon the Canadians to remain neutral, and giving them in forcible language a choice between the protection or the vengeance of the English King. The whole brigade then advanced, preceded by light infantry and rangers, along the river road to Point Levi. Open fields of barley, hay, and flax lay on either side of the marching column, but in the bordering woods the crack of rifles soon showed that the light troops were engaged with Canadian irregulars. The column pushed on, and breasting the hill on which lay the little village of Point Levi, met with considerable resistance from the Canadian riflemen, who had thrown themselves into the church and houses. Monkton himself, however, with his grenadiers attacking the village in front, and the Seventy-Eighth Highlanders rushing upon its rear with wild shouts and drawn broadswords, resistance was soon overcome, and the enemy, about a thousand in number, were driven to the river, where they escaped in boats to Quebec. The New England Rangers returned from this skirmish with six scalps, and sent a thrill of horror

through those officers and soldiers who had not yet been introduced to the ordinary methods of backwoods warfare.

The next day Wolfe stood with his glass upon the new position. Quebec lay right in front of him scarcely a mile away, most of it within easy range of the works he at once began to throw up. The French from their floating batteries hurled shot and shell at his working-parties, but did little execution, and the fire from Quebec was almost as ineffectual. In the meantime gun after gun was got into position, and the dismayed burghers soon found their household gods confronted by the open mouths of forty cannon and mortars. Montcalm ground his teeth at the fate which doomed him to share authority with such a pack of fools. What Vaudreuil thought when he saw Quebec laid with scarcely an effort under Wolfe's batteries history does not say. The Governor was at any rate better than the crew which surrounded him. He was a patriot in the sense that, as a Canadian, he was mortally jealous of Frenchmen born, and also that the loss of Canada meant his ruin. It is possible that he sincerely loved his country, though he had indeed not seldom shown his affection for it in a strange fashion; but he was vain and egotistical, obstinate in debate, and as ready to thwart Montcalm at the council-board as he was incapable of supporting him in the dangers too often brought on by such perversity.

The batteries on Point Levi were almost completed, and the whole of Monkton's brigade was camped under their shelter. In a day or two the citizens would see their houses tumbling about their ears. A night

surprise was the only possible chance of recovering the position, and Montcalm did not believe even in that. A band of fifteen hundred men, however, from the garrison and citizens of Quebec begged permission to attempt the enterprise as volunteers, and received it. Crossing the river high up, out of reach of the British ships and in the darkness of the night, the French force pushed their way rapidly and silently along the broken and wooded banks of the south shore towards Point Levi. The English, exhausted with their arduous labours, were entirely unsuspicious of an attack, and the consequences might well have been serious. But the motley composition of their assailants utterly frustrated the enterprise. They were unequal to the cohesion and steadiness necessary to a night march and a night attack. Some noise alarmed the advanced guard as they pushed their way through the dark and silent woods; their nerve failed them, and they rushed back on the main body, who, mistaking them for the enemy, received them with a volley. Falling into a similar delusion in their excitement and confusion, the retreating vanguard returned the fire. A panic now seized the whole body, and leaving seventy dead and wounded on the scene of this extraordinary performance, they rushed pell-mell to their boats as if the whole English army were at their heels, who, as a matter of fact, had not yet stirred from their intrenchments. How Montcalm received them we do not know; but it is as striking an instance of groundless panic among brave men as could be found probably in the whole history of war.

Upon the 12th of July a rocket was fired from the English lines. It was Wolfe's signal for the batteries of Point Levi to open on Quebec. The first

shots fell short, and derisive cheers sounded from the battlements of the city; but the laugh soon died from the lips of the exultant burghers. In a few minutes the gunners had got their range, and then began the storm of shot and shell that was to rain for weeks upon the devoted city.

It might fairly be asked what good purpose could be served by battering down a city which the English hoped soon to call their own. To answer it successfully one must realise Wolfe's difficult position, and also the manner in which the French had hitherto waged war on the English colonies. With regard to Wolfe, he had a task before him of so difficult a nature that he felt no method must be left untried that would lessen its seeming impossibility. The bombardment of the town would spread terror among the Canadians, already somewhat discontented with the oppression and the exactions of their own Government. It would cause, he rightly calculated, many of the militia to desert, and keep others, already hesitating, from joining Montcalm's army. Wolfe's humanity was notorious; but he knew that his duty as a soldier compelled him to strike the only blow he could at present see his way to striking. It brought him actually no nearer to the possession of the town, but it must weaken the enemy, and perhaps pave the way towards eventually bringing him to his knees. Then again, the record of French enterprise in America was literally strewn with bloody massacres. These, it is true, were the work chiefly of their savage allies; but again and again, as at Fort William-Henry, the restraining hand of the French who fought with them had been deliberately withheld. English soldiers and

New England settlers had been roasted and eaten in the very presence of the militant bigots who too often represented the Canadian priesthood. Hundreds of men and women, and even children, had been murdered, scalped, and tortured by savages fighting under the flag of France and often led by Frenchmen, or rather by French-Canadians, for to do them justice, the soldiers of Old France had usually shown an abhorrence of the ghastly work if they had not always had the power or the courage to stop it. The spirit of vengeance was very strong upon the English side of the frontier. Wolfe probably shared little of this, though he could hardly have been unmoved by it; in fact, we know by his letters that he was not. He opened his batteries, however, upon Quebec simply as a military manœuvre; but the men of Massachusetts and Connecticut, and the British soldiers who had served with them, saw only partial retribution in the crashing roofs and toppling steeples and blazing mansions of the Catholic city. "Such is war," says a witness of the scene, "even when Wolfe the tender, the pious, the domestic, is general."

From the Isle of Orleans nothing could be done with artillery against the lines of Beauport, behind which lay the French army. With two brigades on the island in mid-stream, and one with the batteries of Point Levi and the basin occupied by the British fleet, Wolfe could see his way at present to nothing more than holding the surrounding parishes in check. Day after day the young commander, as he hurried from point to point, chafed at the impotence with which he had to see the days of the brief summer slipping rapidly by while Montcalm lay immovable and unapproachable behind his

miles of breastworks. Bold as Wolfe was he was responsible for the lives of his men, and though the troops who lined the ridges of Beauport were incomparably inferior to his own in the open field, behind earthworks or in the forest they had proved their efficiency in many too well remembered struggles. If only Montcalm would come out and fight! Vaudreuil, indeed, bragged and blustered about the invincible valour of his Canadians, and talked wildly about going out and crushing the English at one blow. But Montcalm knew better. He knew as well as Wolfe the relative value of the two armies if unhappily it should come to a fight in the open. As it was he had simply, so he thought, to sit quiet till winter, hoping and trusting that Bourlamaque and the primeval forest combined would delay the northward march of Amherst. A season's delay only and many things might happen! The colony, though certainly doomed if pressed for long in this fashion, might yet be saved by some stroke of European diplomacy.

The eastern edge of Montcalm's lines rested, as has been seen, upon the gorge of Montmorency. Wolfe, already intrenched on the south shore and in the centre of the stream, determined to complete the blockade, if such it could be called, by landing a force on the eastern bank of the Montmorency; from that vantage point he hoped by following up the course of the river to find some ford by which he could cross and take the French intrenchments in the rear.

This movement, indeed, he executed while the works at Point Levi were completing. Ordering Monkton from the latter post to make a demonstration up the river, as if intending to cross it above the city, he prepared to

move three thousand men of Murray's and Townshend's brigades across the channel dividing the Isle of Orleans from the north shore. A number of battleships were brought up as near the Beauport shore as the shoals would let them come. Under the fire of their guns and those of the Point of Orleans the troops, led by Wolfe, crossed without mishap the two miles of water that lay between the island and the Falls of Montmorency. Day had scarcely broken when a landing was effected just below the mouth of the stream. Climbing upward and driving off with slight loss upon both sides a party of Indians and Canadians, they reached the plateau overlooking the Falls. Montcalm's left and Wolfe's right were now within musket-shot of each other; but between them yawned a great gulf, into which from a height of two hundred and fifty feet plunged with one bound the strenuous torrent of the Montmorency. Between the foot of the Falls and the St. Lawrence the river ran shallow and broad, and could be waded at almost any time; but for many miles above them it was deep and rapid, and the country at that time rough and wooded. Still there were said to be fords, and Wolfe hoped to find them. He at once pushed a body of rangers and regulars up the Montmorency to explore the banks and to cut fascines for the intrenchments. A party of four hundred Indians discovered them, and, hiding themselves, sent word to Repentigny who, with eleven hundred Canadians, lay not far off, that if he came at once they could destroy a whole English battalion. Repentigny feared the responsibility, and sent to Levis and Vaudreuil for orders. In the meantime the Indians lost patience, crossed the ford, fell upon the rangers, and

forced them back upon the British infantry who supported them. The regulars, however, had learned something of forest warfare since Braddock's days, and repulsed the savages, who recrossed the Montmorency with thirty-six New England scalps.

Wolfe at once set to work intrenching his new camp, and getting some guns into position began to cause great annoyance to the extremity of the French lines. Consultations were now held at the French headquarters as to an attack in force on the British camp; but prudent councils still prevailed, and Wolfe's thirst for a battle grew more keen than ever when he found that nothing would tempt Montcalm outside his batteries.

On the 21st he was again at Point Levi amid the din of guns. On the 18th the *Sutherland* and some other British ships had done what the French declared was impossible. Aided by a tremendous cannonade from Point Levi they had faced the fire of all the batteries of Quebec, and passed into the upper river, destroying what craft they found there. Six hundred men had now to be detached from Montcalm's army, and sent above Quebec to watch the line of cliffs between the city and Cap Rouge. On the 22nd Wolfe, with an escort, pushed up the south bank, and embarking in a ship's boat made his first survey of the upper river. He must have gathered but poor consolation from the grim cliffs that mile after mile upon the northern shore rose almost sheer from the water's edge. There were accessible points in the shaggy precipice as Wolfe was to prove, but it was not of them, probably, that he was as yet seriously thinking when he was rowed back to spend the night on the *Sutherland*. "No man," says Knox of his

general, "can display greater activity than he does between the different camps." From Quebec, too, and its tumbling roof-trees comes at this date the wail of a beleaguered priest. "The English are too many for us,—and, who could have suspected it?—part of their fleet passed all our batteries, and are riding in safety above the capital. They have made this town so hot that there is but one place left where we can with safety pay adoration to our most gracious, but now wrathful and displeased God, who, we fear, has forsaken us."

Wolfe now sent his friend Carleton sixteen miles up the river to attack Pointe aux Trembles. Many French families of distinction had sought refuge here, and there were supposed to be papers of value. The French families were there, but not the papers. The former were brought away as prisoners, for what reason it is not easy to see, as they were well treated and sent under a flag of truce to Quebec; not, however, before Wolfe, somewhat characteristically, had entertained all the ladies at dinner. He seems to have made himself particularly agreeable to his fair guests, and jested with them right merrily about Monsieur Montcalm's cruel reluctance to come out and meet him.

On the 27th the French sent down another convoy of fire-ships, which was again frustrated by the gallantry of the sailors, who were heard shouting, as they grappled with the flaming, bellowing monsters, "Damme, Jack, did'st ever take Hell in tow before?" And all this time, though Montcalm and his army never stirred, there was constant skirmishing with Canadian and Indian guerrillas at the back of the English lines. Vigorous efforts were also maintained to compel neutrality among the Canadian

villages. Further proclamations were posted on the church doors to the effect that those who stayed at home unarmed would be protected, but that the houses and property of all absentees would be treated as those of enemies. Stringent orders, however, were issued by Wolfe that no violence was to be offered to any woman, and that no church was to be profaned. That great suffering should fall on the unfortunate Canadians was inevitable. The cattle and crops of those who fought with Montcalm were seized for the English camps, while the peasants who stayed at home were threatened with the direst penalties by their own rulers, whose rangers and Indians could generally find a way of carrying them into execution. Messages of defiance under flags of truce passed backwards and forwards. "We don't doubt," said one of these French envoys to Wolfe, "that you will demolish the town, yet we are determined that your army shall never get a footing within its walls." "I will be master of Quebec," quietly replied the English general, "if I stay here until the end of November."

CHAPTER X

A MONTH OF DISASTER

THE short Canadian summer would soon be waning. July had almost gone and no news of Amherst and his army had reached Quebec; nor would such news, if it had come, have been of a reassuring nature. Wolfe seems now to have fully realised that he could count on no support from his titular commander-in-chief; that if Quebec was to be conquered that season he must conquer it unaided. Hopeless as the task appeared to him as he stood upon the Isle of Orleans, or upon Point Levi, or in his new camp at Montmorency, he felt that England expected a supreme effort to be made. His reputation, his very honour, seemed to his ardent and high-strung nature to be pledged to this great and formidable adventure. And yet nothing would move Montcalm from those impregnable lines that stretched from the surf-lashed chasm beneath him to the rugged ramparts of the warlike city two leagues away. Far to the eastward and the south the light of blazing villages and flaming homesteads reddened the midnight sky; the very sun at noontide was veiled for days together by the pungent haze that told its significant tale of ruin and desolation. From every direction the peasants

poured in, bringing their arms and tendering submission, while constant skirmishes were fought amid the bordering woodlands, in which British soldiers showed that they could now meet the Indian and the ranger on their own ground with a good chance of success.

But all this brought the great issue no nearer. Day and night the fiery messengers of death and destruction rained upon the lower town, but Montcalm would not stir; nor indeed was Wolfe, as he scanned the long and formidable intrenchments that swept along the Beauport shore, surprised at the cautious attitude of his opponent. Close to the water-line a ridge of low but abrupt hills followed the slight curve of the bay westward. In some places this natural barrier reached actually to high-water mark, and thrust out a bastion, as it were, to sweep the narrow strip of land that at other points divided it from the wash of the tide. A considerable part of this ridge was so steep as to form its own defence; where it was possible for troops to scale it, the face of the hill had been scarped and crowned with parapets, and the foot palisaded and armed with abattis.

The plan that Wolfe now resolved on seems desperate, and what hopes of success he had it is not easy to say. That he would have wantonly thrown away his men's lives is out of the question, but his only chance was to try to force on a battle in the open. It had been found impossible to throw a sufficient force across the upper waters of the Montmorency to strike the lines of Beauport in their rear; the only alternative was to strike them in front. Though the French defences extended for some six miles, most of the fourteen thousand men

who lay behind them could be concentrated in a short time at any given point. It is impossible, therefore, to suppose that Wolfe had any hopes of carrying such a position by assault with four thousand men. It is tolerably certain from his own despatches, that he intended the movement of the 31st of July as a challenge to Montcalm rather than the attack on his position into which the reckless impetuosity of the soldiers turned it. Wolfe knew well that Montcalm was much too good a soldier to be drawn of his own accord into such a snare; but there was always the possibility of his being over-ruled by Vaudreuil and his Canadian party. The latter, not unnaturally, held a different view of the relative values of the French and English armies from that which was shared by Montcalm and Wolfe. The militia, so deserters declared, were already chafing at their inaction in the face of a British force so inferior to them in numbers; a very little might bring them all pell-mell from their safe intrenchment upon the English army if once the latter were on the Beauport shore. At any rate it was on the chance of something like this that Wolfe made his preparations for the 31st. He thought the Canadians might get out of hand in spite of Montcalm, and give him the opportunity he was longing for. That his own grenadiers, the picked veterans of half a dozen campaigns, would do so was the last possibility to suggest itself to his mind.

About a mile westward of the Montmorency the ridge of Beauport recedes from the shore, and leaves for a short distance a strip of land some two or three hundred yards in width. At the edge of this strip, close to high-water mark, lay a redoubt, the only outwork

the French had built below the heights. This was the point Wolfe chose for his intended attack. He would capture the isolated redoubt, a matter of no difficulty, and let circumstances decide his further course of action. The day fixed was the last of July. The attack was to be made in two divisions. Townshend, with two thousand men from the camp at Montmorency, was to ford that river below the Falls, and push his way along the strand. Wolfe, with an equal body of men from Point Levi and the Isle of Orleans, was to land upon the mud flats, which at low tide divided the redoubt from the water-line. Admiral Saunders with a frigate was to protect the transports as the troops landed.

At ten o'clock in the morning the General embarked from Point Levi with the Fifteenth, the Seventy-Eighth, part of the Sixtieth or Royal Americans, and all the grenadiers of Monkton's brigade on the south side of the river. Crossing to the Point of Orleans they took on board the rest of the grenadiers. A big battery of forty guns had been erected on the English side of the Montmorency, and the *Centurion* of sixty-four guns had been floated up at high tide to within range of the eastern batteries of the Beauport lines. Amid the thunder of the whole British artillery that on land or sea could be brought into position, Wolfe and his small fleet floated out along the Beauport shore, while Townshend's brigade was drawn up on the eastern bank of the Montmorency to support them when the critical moment should arrive.

From the long lofty lines of the French camps Wolfe's movements were watched with the keenest

anxiety. From Montmorency, where Levis was constantly engaged in a somewhat futile artillery duel with the English batteries, to the Beauport river where Montcalm had his headquarters; from the Beauport river to the lower ground under the city where Vaudreuil held his mimic court, all was astir. Two of the armed transports, one of which had Wolfe on board, moved in towards the shore, and grounded under fire of the French batteries. As the transports with the *Centurion* behind them vomited out fire and smoke, Wolfe, now much closer than he had ever been to the shore, saw that the redoubt he intended to occupy was commanded by cannon and musketry to an extent hitherto unsuspected. It seemed doubtful now whether the English general would do more than make a demonstration on the water. For several hours he moved his troops backwards and forwards in their ships, the French moving theirs from point to point in still greater uncertainty of the intentions of the English. The road that led behind the French lines from Montmorency to Quebec was through the whole morning thronged with troops marching and counter-marching, till at two o'clock Montcalm ordered a division to move round the back of the Montmorency Falls, cross the river high up, and fall upon the English camp in its rear. Wolfe's quick eye caught the movement, and he signalled to the Forty-Eighth regiment which had been left at Point Levi to march up the river above Quebec. This counter-movement frightened Montcalm as it was meant to do, and the column intended for Montmorency was faced about and hurried westward towards the city. It was past four o'clock before Wolfe made up his mind. The attempt, after

long and close observation, had seemed too desperate to be justifiable. The artillery fire upon both sides had almost ceased, and the English flotilla lay inactive upon the still waters of the harbour. The two thousand men under Townshend and Murray stood patiently in their ranks on the eastern shore of the Montmorency waiting for the signal. The day waned; sullen clouds gathered on the hills, and the murky air began to vibrate with the rumbling of distant thunder. Suddenly Wolfe saw what he took to be signs of confusion in the French lines. It was just enough, perhaps, to turn his daring mind into the path his personal inclination ever followed. At half-past four he signalled to the English batteries and ships to open fire, and the artillery of the skies was soon drowned in the deafening roar that arose from land and sea. At five o'clock a red ensign ran up to the masthead of Wolfe's transport. It was the signal to advance, and with loud cheers the boats crowded with troops dashed onwards towards the mud flats which the receding tide had left bare between the water and the narrow strip of firm ground beneath the Beauport heights.

The French batteries opened on them fiercely, and to make matters worse, unsuspected ledges of rock created much confusion among the boats. Wolfe, muttering anathemas no doubt on the naval officers whose business it was to see him safely over the shoals, sprang into a boat, and with a handful of sailors pushed forward in quest of a clear channel. This was soon found, and signalling his boats to advance, he led them himself towards the shore amid a hail of bullets and cannon shot. Three times was the General struck by splinters,

while his cane was actually knocked from his hand by a cannon-ball. His point of attack was the outwork upon the shore, near the Montmorency end of the French lines. The enemy were now massing their men upon the heights and hurrying from the western portion of the lines to the threatened quarter; Montcalm had galloped up in hot haste; Levis was already there. Townshend, who had started to cross the ford with his brigade, but had been signalled to stop when the boats stuck on the rocks, was once more in motion. The darkness of a summer storm was spreading and deepening as the thirteen companies of grenadiers and the Royal Americans leapt on shore, and began to form in columns on the beach. The French at once abandoned the outlying redoubt and retired to their main intrenchments on the hills behind, and but a few hundred yards distant.

And now, what demon entered into the souls of the flower of the best army that England had sent out since the peace of Utrecht, who can say? In a few minutes Townshend's brigade would be with them, while the Fifteenth and Seventy-Eighth under Monkton were in the act of landing. What Wolfe's exact course of action would have been he was probably at that moment deciding, for it was his first near view of the French works. He could at least have led his troops back at any time without much loss. The grenadiers and Royal Americans now upon the shore were a little over one thousand in number. Before them lay fourteen thousand Frenchmen strongly intrenched. Little need be said except that they behaved like madmen. Swelling with an overweening pride and confidence in their own powers, they would not wait even to form their ranks.

The shouts and imprecations of their officers fell on deaf ears. Company after company they broke into a run, and with loud shouts and in the utmost disorder, rushed each man for himself at the heights on which the French army lay. Their officers had nothing for it now but to go with them. It was a pitiable sight. The steep slope upon which these heroic madmen flung themselves could be raked in front and flank by the fire of thousands of hidden riflemen and two batteries of cannon. When they reached the foot of the hill the rain that had already begun pattering on the leaves broke in all its fury. At the same time the more terrible storm of lead burst from the overhanging breastworks, towards which the unhappy red-coats wildly and vainly struggled. The lashing rain dashed in streams down the slippery slope and mingled with the blood of the dead and dying, who fell by scores beneath the pitiless discharge. Wolfe was forming Monkton's troops upon the shore, but to support such a mad escapade would only have been to sacrifice good men in vain. It was bad enough as it was; but the rain turned into a perfect deluge, and fairly quenched at once the fire of the French and the mad advance of the grenadiers, whose survivors came straggling back slowly and reluctantly even then to Wolfe's lines upon the shore. In a few minutes the fierce, brief storm was over, and the steep face of the hill from its base to the very breastworks at its summit, was seen to be thickly sprinkled with the red-clad bodies of the British infantry. The sun burst once more through the clouds, and at the same time hundreds of Indians with tomahawk and scalping-knife swooped down from the woods to gather their bloody treasures

from dead and wounded indiscriminately. The Seventy-Eighth Highlanders were sent forward to protect and bring off the wounded, and their mission being apparently recognised and respected by the French batteries was fairly successful. It remained now only for Wolfe to draw off his troops to their respective camps and to count the cost of the expedition. The former was done without loss and in good order. The latter was simply a matter of arithmetic, and produced a total of four hundred and forty-three men killed and wounded, including thirty-three officers.

In the English camps that night all was gloom and sorrow. Along the French lines reigned joy and triumph. Many thought the campaign was over. "I have no more anxiety about Quebec," wrote Vaudreuil. Montcalm and his officers were delighted with the steady firing of the Canadian militia. There seems to have been, however, another side to the question in Montcalm's thoughts. The British vanguard had behaved like madmen, it was true; but their desperate valour had impressed him, and he was more than ever convinced that a battle in the open must at all hazards be avoided. The English dead he had decently buried; and those of the wounded who fell into his hands and escaped the Indian tomahawk were well cared for.

Wolfe's feelings must have been bitter enough as he drifted sadly back to the camp at Montmorency with his boat-loads of wounded. His disappointment, however, did not prevent him from thinking of others. The officers of the grenadiers had suffered a double blow in their own loss and the behaviour of their men. Wolfe visited personally that night every wounded officer,

and to show that he considered them absolutely free from blame, he invited the survivors to dine with him.

Among the grenadiers that fell that day in the Beauport lines was a sergeant, Ned Botwood of the Forty-Seventh, a noted writer of the doggrel verse that was such a feature of both the French and English armies in those days. Botwood was the bard of Wolfe's force, and some of his patriotic and warlike effusions were familiar in the camps of the Revolutionary War twenty years later. Here is a specimen :—

Come, each death-doing dog who dares venture his neck,
Come, follow the hero that goes to Quebec ;
Jump aboard of the transports and loose every sail,
Pay your debts at the tavern by giving leg-bail ;
And ye that love fighting shall soon have enough,—
Wolfe commands us, my boys ; we shall give them hot stuff !

The morning after the repulse Wolfe gave vent to his feelings in the following manifesto: "The check which the grenadiers met with yesterday will, it is hoped, be a lesson to them for all time to come. Such impetuous, irregular, and unsoldierlike proceedings destroy all order, make it impossible for their comrades to form any disposition for an attack, and put it out of the general's power to execute his plan. The grenadiers could not suppose that they alone could beat the French army, and therefore it was necessary that the corps under Brigadiers Monkton and Townshend should have time to join, that the attack might be general. The very first fire of the enemy would be sufficient to repulse men who had lost all sense of order and discipline." He wrote at the same time a long and most admirable despatch to Pitt

describing the whole affair, the composition of which seems to have caused much comment. People who only knew of Wolfe as a vigorous and capable young soldier could not believe that he wrote it. Charles Townshend gave out that his brother the brigadier must have been the author. After Wolfe's death and the fall of Quebec, when Townshend had actually to take up the pen as well as the sword of the chief command, the inferiority of his productions was very marked. "If your brother," remarked George Selwyn to Charles Townshend, "wrote Wolfe's despatches, who the devil wrote your brother's?"

Wolfe's mental anxiety and distress began now to tell upon his feeble frame. The chronic maladies to which he was a martyr broke out afresh under the fatigue and disappointment which the gallant invalid had endured. So long, however, as he could stand he faced the dreary outlook. Despair, he tells us himself, had now taken possession of his soul, and he looked upon himself privately as a ruined man. No sign of this, however, showed itself in public. Nor did his failing health impair his bodily energy or cloud the bold face he showed at the head of his men, as moving rapidly from one point to another, now up the river, now down, he worried the enemy with incessant feints and alarms, and kept their drums beating and their troops almost constantly in motion.

Three days after the disaster at Beauport, Wolfe sent an expedition up the river to destroy the French ships which, before the siege, had taken refuge there. Admiral Holmes, who with twenty-two ships of the British fleet was already above the town, took on board

Brigadier Murray with twelve hundred men from Point Levi. Montcalm answered by despatching fifteen hundred men under Bougainville to follow the fleet along the north bank. Murray found every point of that formidable coast strongly guarded. The French ships, whose crews were already manning the batteries of Quebec, now sent their stores and ammunition on shore, and thus lightened made their way up shallow creeks out of harm's way. Twice Murray tried to land, and was twice driven back. A third attempt at the village of Dechambault succeeded; some valuable stores of clothing and provisions were destroyed, a few prisoners of note captured, and also some valuable letters. From the latter Wolfe learned that Crown Point on Lake Champlain had at last been occupied by Amherst, and that Niagara, the western trading capital of Canada, had been captured by Johnson. These successes, however, promised no hope of succour to the gallant army before Quebec. Murray's expedition had at any rate frightened Montcalm, for he hurried in person up the river; but when he reached Dechambault the English had gone.

The pitiless rain of shot and shell still fell upon Quebec. Nearly the whole of the lower town was in ruins, and not a night passed that was not illumined by the glare of blazing houses. Further proclamations were posted on every church door that Wolfe's light infantry and rangers could reach, calling on the peasantry to submit. Where the English general's terms were not complied with, the torch, often perhaps in too ready hands, was thrust beneath the thatch or shingle roofs of barn and farmhouse. From the battlements of Quebec, from the heights of Point Levi, from the crested

ridges of Beauport and Montmorency, far as the eye could reach towards Cape Tourmente and the Isle aux Coudres, columns of white smoke broke at frequent intervals the interminable sea of woodland. Black cattle and hogs by hundreds were brought in to replenish the waning supplies of the English camp. Great numbers of prisoners were brought there, too, though of what advantage their retention was it is not very easy to see. No women or children seem, however, to have been harmed, for on this Wolfe was stringent. The captives, moreover, were treated with the utmost kindness, the soldiers often sharing with them their rations and tobacco. Still the condition of the simple priest-ridden peasantry, whose homes for fifty miles lined both banks of the St. Lawrence, was pitiful enough. The harvest was ripening, but in too many cases the grain-fields and barn-yards had been the battle-ground of Indians and rangers, of militiamen and Wolfe's light infantry. There was nothing to reap, or if there was, the reaper perchance had been himself already gathered by the grim harvester of human lives. In the meantime sickness and disease had struck the English camp, and by the middle of August nearly a thousand men of Wolfe's small army were in hospital. Rumours, moreover, of a French descent in force filled the air. Wolfe, sick at heart and ill in body, only wished it might be true, but did not believe it, for the French also had suffered losses. The claims of harvest-time being too urgent for the authorities altogether to disregard them, numbers of the militia either obtained leave of absence or took it. Montcalm, moreover, had been compelled to send his trusty lieutenant Levis with fifteen hundred men to

Montreal, for Amherst was surely though slowly moving northward, and Lake Ontario was already in English hands. Provisions also were running very short, and for these the French depended entirely on their communications being kept open between Quebec and Montreal.

Wolfe still kept a stout heart. Some one spoke to him of a promising young officer, whose delicate constitution seemed to be a stumbling-block in his career. "Don't talk to me of constitution," said he. "Mr. —— has spirit, and that will carry a man through anything." But even Wolfe's indomitable spirit could not fight with impunity the fever that now fastened upon his emaciated frame. On the 20th of August it was known through the whole army that the General could not rise from his bed. His situation was indeed grievous. Racked with pain and tortured with anxiety, he lay weak and helpless in an upper room of the stone farm-house at Montmorency that constituted his headquarters. He was unable to see or speak with his officers. Cramped up between the four bare walls of his cheerless chamber, he was left to fill the intervals of freedom from physical pain with the anguish of his own desponding thoughts. These must indeed have been sufficiently gloomy. No ray of light seemed at that moment to shine through the darkness. The days were rapidly shortening; a little longer and the rock-girt city would be snatched irrevocably from his grasp by the iron grip of the northern winter.

For one day, at least, he was dangerously ill. From the surrounding tents of Montmorency to Hardy's camp at Orleans, and from Orleans to the roaring batteries on the heights of Point Levi, the grievous news ran fast.

Hundreds of gallant hearts felt the chill of sorrow and suspense, and breathed a prayer, or the nearest thing to it of which they might be capable, for the restoration of their well-loved chief, whose fiery valour and indomitable spirit swayed them all.

Wolfe's time, however, had not yet come. How soon and how gloriously different the end was to be he little thought! For five days he was absolutely helpless; but on the 25th it was known through the army, "to its inconceivable joy," as honest Major Knox declares, that the General was better. As soon as he could think Wolfe's busy brain was at work. He formally requested the brigadiers to consult together, so that the army might not suffer by his illness, and requested that any plans for the reduction of the city which might commend themselves to his subordinates in council should be brought to his bedside. He himself proposed several plans, and asked his brigadiers to consider which was best.

The possibility of winter finding him still thundering at the gates of Quebec was an unbearable thought, but it could not be absolutely disregarded by a general in his position; and it seems that the Isle aux Coudres, some eighty miles down the river, had occurred to him as winter quarters in case of this unspeakable eventuality. He felt that he had been conspicuously singled out by Pitt for the business in hand; and that its difficulties had not been in the least understood gave him no consolation whatever in the prospect of failure. He declared again and again, "That he would never return without success to be exposed, as other unfortunate commanders had been, to the censure and reproach of an ignorant populace."

The General's illness, too, put a stop to the friendly dinners at which almost every night he had been wont to entertain the officers of the various regiments in turn. The only one of his subordinates with whom there appears to have been a jarring note was Townshend, who was beyond a doubt jealous of Wolfe. Though a capable soldier he seems to have been irritating in private life, and among other things to have been addicted to caricaturing his friends after a fashion not always compatible with good taste. A story runs that upon one occasion at the General's own table, and in a mixed company, the cynical aristocrat drew a caricature of his host and chief that far exceeded the limits both of good nature and good taste. Passing it round the table for inspection, it at last reached the hands of Wolfe. The latter looked at it, folded it up, and putting it in his pocket, quietly but sternly remarked, "If we live this matter must be gone into later, but we must first beat the enemy."

By the 1st of September Wolfe's short but sharp attack was over, and though weak enough he was able to get about once more among his troops. When he rose from his bed, however, he had resolved upon the desperate venture which cost him his frail life and gained him immortal fame. There is much discussion and uncertainty as to who first suggested the hazardous undertaking of scaling the cliffs on the north shore above Quebec, which Wolfe had now determined to attempt. It signifies little. As a matter of fact an attack on the town from the west would naturally have suggested itself to every one connected with the siege, till they saw with their own eyes the enormous difficulties it

presented. The high and rocky bluffs upon which the upper town of Quebec stands perched continue westward along the north bank of the river for several miles, falling from the tableland above to the brink of the water in a continuous and almost sheer precipice of from two to three hundred feet in height. The face of the cliff has just slope enough to enable a few stunted trees and bushes to eke out upon it a precarious existence, while at certain points the rocky barrier is cleft by the wash of a falling stream or riven by some freak of nature into a form more accessible to the human foot. But all such points had been carefully guarded by Montcalm, and without much difficulty rendered to all seeming absolutely secure against a foe.

Wolfe, however, supported by his brigadiers, had hopes, faint ones perhaps, but still hopes, that by a bold dash at one or other of these points he might surprise the enemy and force him to a battle. It was the only thing left to him, and if by rare good chance he could once get his troops on to the top, on to the open ground, that is to say, before the city's western ramparts, he had no doubt of the result. Four or five thousand men was the most he could spare for the venture. Montcalm could meet him there with twice the number; but Wolfe seems to have had no doubts whatever as to the result of a meeting even under such conditions, and Montcalm himself does not seem to have held a very different opinion.

Before issuing his orders Wolfe sat down and wrote several letters. Among them was the last he ever addressed to his now widowed mother, couched in the cheery, affectionate strain he always adopted towards her. With

pardonable equivocation he tells her that nothing worse than defeats and disappointments have befallen him. "The enemy puts nothing to risk, and I can't in conscience put the whole army to risk. The Marquis is at the head of a great number of bad soldiers, and I am at the head of a small number of good ones, that wish for nothing so much as to fight him, but the wary old fellow avoids an action, doubtful of the behaviour of his army. People must be of the profession to understand the disadvantages and difficulties we labour under from the uncommon natural strength of the country." He concludes by begging his mother in her money affairs not to meddle with the funds, but to wait for better times.

At the same date Wolfe sent off a long despatch to Pitt, in which he informed him of the resolution arrived at. "There is such a choice of difficulties in this situation," he wrote, "that I own myself at a loss how to determine. The affairs of Great Britain, I know, require the most vigorous measures, but the courage of a handful of brave men should be exerted only when there is some hope of a favourable event. However, you may be assured, sir, that the small part of the campaign which remains shall be employed as far as I am able for the honour of his Majesty and the interest of the nation, in which I am sure of being well seconded by the admiral and by the generals. Happy if our efforts here can contribute to the success of his Majesty's arms in any other part of America."

On the 2nd of September commenced the movement that to Wolfe and his companions seemed so forlorn a hope, but which was destined to form one of the most glorious pages in British history.

CHAPTER XI

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

WOLFE'S army was now weaker by over a thousand men, actually killed and wounded in battle, than when it arrived before Quebec. In addition to this there were at least five hundred in hospital and unfit for duty. Strong detachments had of necessity to be left at the Point of Orleans and the camp at Point Levi. There remained then only something over four thousand men for the bold stroke that was now intended. The camp at Montmorency was abandoned on the evening of the 3rd without molestation from the enemy. The preparations for this had been seen from Quebec, and Montcalm had ordered a division of two thousand men to march round behind the cataract and fall on the retiring British. Monkton, however, from his post just across the river at Point Levi saw the movement, and promptly checked it by a counter-demonstration against the Beauport shore. The British, carrying with them their sick and wounded, were safely embarked, and in spite of some wild firing from the French batteries were conveyed without mishap to the camp at Point Levi. The practice of the French gunners throughout the whole siege seems to have been very indifferent. The

British ships had been constantly passing up and down the river under the big guns of the city, where the passage is only three-quarters of a mile in width, and the damage done had been very trifling. It was now Wolfe's intention to put his attacking force on board the ships that were above the city, and keep them there till he should determine the exact point at which to strike the enemy. The army, which included the three brigadiers and every man that was not required for defending the two camps at the Points of Orleans and Levi, was paraded at the latter place on September the 4th, and upon that night the General, who seemed much better, dined with the officers of Monkton's brigade. Upon the 6th the various regiments comprising the force, with the exception of the Forty-Eighth under Colonel Burton, which was to wait till sent for, moved westwards along a road leading through woods and desolated fields to where the river Etchemin pours its broad and shallow waters into the St. Lawrence. Fording this they made for a neighbouring cove, where boats were waiting to convey them on board the fleet. Having embarked the troops Admiral Holmes moved his ships high up the river to Cape Rouge, some eight miles above Quebec. On the night of the 5th the General, to the alarm of the whole army, was again very ill. He told the doctor he knew that a cure was impossible, but begged that he would patch him up sufficiently to go through the work in hand. "After that," said he, "nothing matters." The doctor's efforts and his patient's unconquerable spirit again prevailed, and Wolfe joined his army on board the fleet at Cape Rouge during the evening of the 6th. Behind Cape Rouge, strongly intrenched,

lay Bougainville with fifteen hundred men. From there to Quebec frowned the dark cliff that has been already described. "There was no part of it," said Montcalm, "that a hundred men could not defend against the whole British army." Indeed, what safety there might be in Wolfe's plan lay in its very audacity.

Some firing in the meantime went on between Bougainville's camp and the fleet. This was encouraged by the English with the view of keeping the enemy's attention occupied while Wolfe, in a boat with an armed escort and glass in hand, passed up and down the river in anxious survey of the forbidding shore. Not a soul in the army save the brigadiers knew exactly what was intended; but they were all aware that, in the military phrase of the day, they were up there to do business, and that was quite enough. The weather, however, was unpropitious; an east wind laden with rain blew up stream and made such a delicate operation as Wolfe contemplated out of the question. Thirty-six hundred troops were in the meantime cooped up in cramped quarters on the ships, and had to be landed till the weather should moderate. Up and down with the strong tide swung the fleet, apparently in aimless fashion, the anchors often dragging over the rocky bottom. Wolfe, who was on the *Sutherland*, wrote from thence his last letter. It was to Lord Holdernesse, one of the Secretaries of State, and ended with these words: "I am here with three thousand six hundred men waiting an opportunity to attack when and wherever they can best be got at."

Montcalm was puzzled. Admiral Saunders and the troops left below were doing their utmost, by feigned attacks and artillery fire, to make him think that the

assault was after all to be made at Beauport. Nor did the French general seem to have realised the number of English troops that had passed up the river. He knew that Bougainville was securely intrenched in force at the first serious break in the cliffs above the city. To the same officer, too, belonged the responsibility, trifling as it seemed, of securing against surprise any path or ravine there might be between his camp and the city; and this, as we shall see, he had not failed to do. Both Montcalm and Bougainville were equally perplexed, and spent a long succession of anxious days and nights in watching the mysterious movements of the British forces. "What we knew," said a Frenchman on the spot, "of the character of Monsieur Wolfe, that impetuous, bold, and intrepid warrior, prepared us for a last attack before he left us."

In the meantime the English general—while the fleet was swinging up and down the river with the tide, and the troops were taking their ease and drying their drenched clothes on the south shore—had selected the spot for the ascent. A zigzag path, winding its way up the steep face of the Anse du Foulon, had sometime before caught his keen eye, and he now marked it for the business on hand. That this was negotiable was very evident from the white gleam of half a score of tents which proclaimed the presence of an outpost at its summit. It seemed to Wolfe that so small a force might with good fortune be overcome by a handful of resolute men. A brave but eccentric Scotchman, Major Stobo, had just arrived from Halifax at Wolfe's headquarters. By students of these wars he will be remembered as taking part in the very first blow that

was formally struck at the French in America. He stood shoulder to shoulder with young Washington in the pelting rain at Fort Necessity; and when that fire-eating youth had to surrender to an overwhelming force of Frenchmen in the Pennsylvania forests, the gallant Stobo remained as a hostage with the enemy. But what is more to the purpose, he had been taken a prisoner to Quebec, and his knowledge of the city and its neighbourhood proved of considerable value to Wolfe.

The weather now cleared, and the propitious moment had arrived. On the 11th the troops once more went on board their ships, and word was sent to Colonel Burton at Point Levi to march his men along the shore and take up his station on the south bank of the river opposite the Anse du Foulon. All this time Montcalm and his officers were working like slaves. The demon of jealousy had been for the time allayed by the sense of some impending crisis. "I am overwhelmed with work," wrote the gallant Frenchman to Bourlamaque at Montreal, "and should often lose my temper like you if I did not remember that I am paid by Europe for not losing it. I give the enemy another month, or something less, to stay here. . . . The night is dark; the troops are in their tents with clothes on ready for an alarm; I in my boots; my horses saddled. In fact, this is my usual way. I wish you were here, for I cannot be everywhere, though I multiply myself, and have not taken off my clothes since the 22nd of June."

The British troops were now once more upon the river, some in frigates, some in sloops, others in flat-bottomed boats. All knew that the moment of action

had arrived, but neither officer nor private knew its purport.

Wolfe was busy in the cabin of the *Sutherland* penning his last orders to the troops. He pointed out the divisions in the Canadian army, the discontent of the peasantry, the departure of Levis with his corps for Montreal, and underlined this significant sentence, "A vigorous blow struck by the army at this juncture may determine the fate of Canada." The orders go on to direct, "That the first body which gets on shore shall at once attack any post in front of them, and hold it till the main army come up. The battalions are to form as rapidly as possible, and to charge whatever presents itself. Officers and men will remember what their country expects of them." With a final appeal to the soldiers to be attentive and obedient to their officers, and resolute in the execution of their duty, Wolfe closes the last address he ever issued to the troops who followed him. "Nay, how could it be otherwise," says a tough old sergeant of Wolfe's army, "being at the heels of gentlemen, whose whole thirst, equal with their general, is for glory. We had seen them tried and always found them sterling. We knew that they would stand by us to the last extremity."

As the fleet and army lay waiting for the signal to move forward on their still unknown adventure, an incident is recorded by Knox which, though trifling in itself, helps to illustrate one cause of Wolfe's great popularity. A couple of subalterns of the Forty-Third were lying weak and ill on board one of the transports. The General visited them, spoke to them with the "utmost tenderness," and begged them to go ashore to

the hospital at Point Levi, offering to lend them his own barge and his own escort. The young officers would not hear of it. They saw before them the General who twice in the last fortnight had been stricken almost unto death and yet was facing, without any thought of self, more than the fatigue of a field-officer, and carrying without flinching the whole responsibility of an expedition which seemed foredoomed by circumstances to failure.

On the 12th two deserters had come in from Bougainville's camp at Cape Rouge. A convoy of provisions, they reported, was to be sent that night down the river to Quebec. This greatly favoured Wolfe's design. By stealing ahead of the convoy which the sentries on the cliffs would be expecting, he might easily in the darkness of the night pass his leading boats off as part of it. At any rate it was a point in his favour which he had not reckoned upon.

The short twilight of the September day gave rapid place to the gloom of a star-lit but moonless night. The silence, which for some hours had reigned both upon land and water, was broken at sundown by the crash of Saunders's guns and floating batteries which, as arranged, were to close in and threaten the French lines below the city. At the same time the tireless throats of the cannon on Point Levi opened once more to vomit shot and shell into the battered ruins of the lower town. Wolfe's troops, as they lay silent and expectant in their boats far up the river, could see the eastern sky red with the glare of the fierce artillery. The inflowing tide was rushing under the keels of the English ships as they swung at their anchors; at the ebb, soon after mid-

night, the start would be made. Wolfe was in the cabin of the *Sutherland*. Sitting there with him was his old schoolfellow, John Jervis, the future admiral, who happened to be in charge of a sloop in the Quebec squadron. Wolfe had a delicate commission to entrust to some one; his own officers had an equal risk of falling with himself; so, sending for Jervis, he told him that he did not expect to survive the battle which he hoped to fight in the morning, and taking from round his neck a miniature of Miss Lowther gave it into the keeping of his friend, with the request that, in the event of his death, it should be delivered into the hands of the lady herself.

Towards two o'clock the tide began to ebb, and a fresh westerly breeze stirred the pine woods on the river bank and ruffled the surface of the water. Two lanterns, the appointed signal, gleamed from the main-top of the *Sutherland*. Wolfe and his officers went on board the boats already loaded with their full complement of troops, and the whole flotilla began stealthily to drop down stream. In the boats were sixteen hundred men; in the sloops and frigates were about as many more, and these were ordered to follow slowly at a distance, but in readiness to support the first landing, while Colonel Burton, with the Forty-Eighth regiment and some other mixed companies, was waiting upon the south shore of the river to join the rest at the proper moment.

The night was dark, the harvest moon had vanished, and the starlight of even these northern climes made small impression on the gloomy shadows of the cliffs beneath which the fateful convoy silently drifted. Far away down the river, below Quebec, the booming of cannon sounded both from sea and shore, and the stir

of anxious expectation gave Montcalm and his troops a restless night. But their eyes and thoughts were wholly bent on Saunders's ships and Point Levi, nor did they imagine for one instant that their fate was slowly drifting down on them from the distant headland of Cape Rouge.

Absolute reticence had been observed among the English leaders as to the exact nature of the enterprise. Even at this moment very few besides Wolfe were in the secret. To Colonel Howe, Wolfe's old companion in arms, was given the honour of leading the van. He had called for twenty-four volunteers for a dangerous service, the nature of which was not specified, and the response had been prompt and immediate. Slowly and noiselessly the thirty boats with their armed freight crept along in the shadow of the north shore. The flow of the tide was so strong that the sailors worked their oars with scarcely any effort, and with so little sound that the click of the rowlocks and the dip of the blades were inaudible to many of the sentries and outposts they had to pass. The General himself led the way. Not a human sound broke the stillness of the upper river. The crickets trilled from the woods, the bull-frogs boomed from the reedy backwaters, a screech-owl or a whip-poor-will answered from overhanging orchards. In the boats not a soldier stirred or spoke. Wolfe, at this supreme crisis of his life, when the slightest misadventure meant failure and almost ruin, was reciting in solemn and half-whispered tones to the officers about him the beautiful lines of Gray's *Elegy*, then lately published. We know this through John Robertson, afterwards Professor of Natural Philosophy in the

University of Edinburgh, who was at the time a midshipman and in the same boat with Wolfe. How deeply suggestive must the familiar stanza have sounded in after years to the fortunate few who could recall the hushed tones of their heroic leader as he drifted onwards through the darkness to fame and death!

> The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
> And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
> Await alike th' inevitable hour;
> The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I would sooner have written that poem than take Quebec." "No one was there," says the American historian Parkman, "to tell him that the hero is greater than the poet."

If Wolfe seemed to have had some forebodings of his impending fate, so also, it would appear, had his chivalrous and less fortunate opponent. Writing in despair at the condition of things to a friend in France, says Montcalm: "Of one thing I can assure you, I shall not survive the probable loss of the colony. There are times when a general's only resource is to die with honour. No stain shall rest on my memory; but in defeat and death there is consolation left. The loss of the colony will one day be of more value to my country than victory. The conqueror shall here find a tomb. His aggrandisement shall prove his ultimate ruin."

No such gloomy forebodings, true enough though they were in a sense, found room in the minds of the brave soldiers whose leading boats had now drawn close to the Anse du Foulon. At one point the voice of a sentry on the cliff above had challenged them, and a

sharp *Qui vive!* rang out through the darkness. A Highland officer who had served on the Continent, and spoke French fluently, replied "*La France.*" "*À quel régiment?*" called out the suspicious sentry. "*De la Reine,*" replied the ready-tongued Highlander. The convoy of provisions was expected, and the sentry let them pass. From the cliffs of Samos another sentry took alarm, and, running down to the water's edge and peering through the darkness, demanded the nature and the business of the mysterious convoy. It was still quite dark, and the Highland officer once more proved equal to the emergency. "Provision boats," he replied in good French; "don't make a noise—the English will hear us." Again the sentry was satisfied, but it was a narrow escape. As the boats rounded the point and drew in towards the beach of the Anse du Foulon, no sign of life came from the summit of the cliff, which was here about two hundred feet high, and had just slope enough to afford a scanty living to the stunted trees and bushes which covered its face from base to summit. Some of the leading boats were washed by the strength of the current beyond the intended landing-place. It made little difference, however, for the zigzag path, to whose foot Wolfe naturally directed his course, proved to be blocked by obstructions artificially thrown up; but to Howe and his volunteers the whole cliff seemed equally accessible as they leaped on shore and threw themselves upon it. Keeping as near together as the darkness and the difficulty of the ascent would admit of, and dragging themselves up by the help of the bushes, the small detachment of light infantry and Highlanders were soon at the top. The first streak of dawn was just piercing the dark-

ness. The soldiers saw before them in the dim light the cluster of tents which was the immediate object of attack, and dashed straight at them. The discomfiture of the handful of astonished men who occupied them was the work of a moment. Their officer, who had been reprimanded in the preceding year for cowardice, alone stood his ground, and, firing his pistols at the English soldiers, refused to surrender. At the first crack of a musket on the top, Wolfe and the rest of his men threw themselves on the precipice, scaling it as they best could, while the winding path was being cleared of its defences. The ships and transports were now coming rapidly up on the track of the boats. The weak detachments of French at Sillery and along the cliffs east of the landing-place were now thoroughly alarmed, and opened a somewhat galling fire on the loaded boats which were becoming plainly visible in the dawning day. But it was too late for such weak endeavours. Wolfe and his sixteen hundred men were scrambling already on to the plateau; the second brigade from the transports was even now landing and forming on the narrow beach beneath; on the opposite shore was Burton. He had seen through the fast breaking gloom the flash of Howe's muskets on the summit of the Anse du Foulon, and twelve hundred eager soldiers stood around him ready to embark at a moment's notice. Long before the red glow of the sunrise had made its vain endeavour to pierce the heavy clouds which now came rolling down from the westward, the empty boats were upon Burton's beach. In half an hour the last battalion of the four thousand five hundred men, that Wolfe by his great and daring stroke led on to the Plains of Abraham, was

wending its way in single file up the face of the cliff that now bears his immortal name.

The English, however, had not been allowed to form upon the heights without some protest. A small battery at Samos, close upon their left, and another just beyond at Sillery, had done all they were capable of. It was not much, for Howe, with some light infantry, had been at once despatched by Wolfe to silence and occupy them. It was now broad daylight, and a light rain was falling from a gray and murky sky. No further enemy had appeared in sight, and Wolfe had time to take a survey of the ground and make his dispositions. So far all had gone well with him. He had at last fairly outmanœuvred Montcalm; it remained now to fight him, and of the issue of the battle, though immensely outnumbered, he had little fear. Yet, to a man less bold and confident, the position would have seemed a critical one. Bougainville, with nearly two thousand men, was but a few miles to his rear. In his front lay Quebec and Montcalm, with an army that, though widely extended, numbered at least ten thousand men, besides Indians. The sooner he struck the blow the fewer the troops that the French general could bring against him, and he lost no time in surveying the ground which lay between his present position and the city. His mind was soon made up. Two companies of the Fifty-Eighth regiment were left to guard the landing-place; and before six o'clock the rest of the English army were marching briskly by files to the right on to the Plains of Abraham, not a mile from the city.

Montcalm had been up all night, worried and perplexed by the threatening actions of the British below

Quebec. He could not believe, said some deserters who had come into Wolfe's quarters the day before, that the greater portion of the English army was above the city; and that Bougainville, with two thousand men, could not take care of a line of defence made so formidable by nature, never entered into his head for a moment. The Chevalier Johnstone was Montcalm's companion on this memorable night. Vaudreuil's quarters were much nearer the city than Montcalm's, who, fully engrossed with his army at Beauport, was at least four miles from Quebec. The former had promised to report instantly any news of moment; but none had come, though the General had himself heard firing far away towards Sillery, and had felt a twinge or two of uneasiness. At a little before six o'clock some Canadians dashed into his headquarters with the astounding news that the British were on the Plains of Abraham. Montcalm would not believe it, or at the worst it could be only a company or two that had got up there to pillage. Mounting his horse, however, he and Johnstone rode at full speed to Vaudreuil's quarters. As they drew rein before his house, the tableland behind Quebec came into view, and away beyond the valley of the St. Charles Montcalm saw, to his astonishment and consternation, what looked in the gray misty morning like a band of scarlet stretched across the whole width of the Plains, while an intermittent rattle of musketry was borne from the same quarter upon the wind. That faint red line was the British army; there was no longer any room for doubt, and the shots that he heard was some desultory skirmishing with Bougainville's outposts.

"This is a serious business," was all that Montcalm could say in his amazement; but he sent Johnstone at a gallop to bring up all the troops that could be spared from the left and centre of the Beauport lines. Vaudreuil seems to have been already aware of what had happened, though for some extraordinary reason he had failed to communicate it to the commander-in-chief, and the right wing of the French army was, at his orders, already streaming over the bridge of boats that spanned the St. Charles when Montcalm arrived.

For fully two hours a throng of soldiers went pouring over the bridge, and threading in hurry and confusion what the English cannon had left of the steep and tortuous streets of Quebec. The regiment of Guienne was early upon the scene. Hurrying onward past the battered walls of churches and convents, and pressing through the various gates of the city, poured the chivalry of New France. The regiments of Old France, so famous in these bloody wars, were there eager for the fray; La Sarre, Languedoc, Royal Rousillon, Béarn, the heroes of Ticonderoga, the victors in the savage carnage at Oswego and Fort William-Henry. The troops of the colony in their blue uniforms were pushing to the front, while fifteen hundred militiamen were already plying their muskets from the thickets which lined either side of the field of battle.

The French had held a hurried council of war, at which Montcalm, in the face of some opposition, had decided for giving battle at once. He has been greatly criticised for this, and not unjustly. Messengers had been sent to Bougainville at Cape Rouge, eight miles off, to order him up; and it is not easy to see why Mont-

calm did not wait for him, unless, indeed, the temper of his troops influenced him, which in a French force, particularly in such a mixed force as his, was a matter to be taken into serious account.

Wolfe in the meantime had drawn up his army in order of battle. On the right, reaching to the fringe of woodland which lined the cliffs over the St. Lawrence, were the Thirty-Fifth regiment and the grenadiers of Louisbourg who had behaved so wildly on the 31st of July. These, with the Twenty-Eighth, formed the right wing, and as if in graceful recognition that the errors of the grenadiers were but an excess of zeal which had already been sufficiently punished, Wolfe himself was to lead them. In the centre stood the Forty-Third and the Forty-Seventh regiments; on the left the Seventy-Eighth and the Fifty-Eighth. Extended in a formation of three deep across the plateau, the First Division was not even then strong enough to touch with its left the wood-fringed edge of the slopes which dropped down into the St. Charles valley. This gap Wolfe filled by moving up a detachment of the Second Division, which latter, under Townshend, consisted of the Fifteenth regiment and the two battalions of the Sixtieth or Royal Americans. The Forty-Eighth regiment under Colonel Burton formed the reserve.

Not a mile away the French army was rapidly gathering before the ramparts of the city. In the meantime their sharp-shooters had pushed forward among the woods that lined both sides of the battlefield, and even occupied the patches of scrub and thicket which were scattered about the open plain. Some light infantry were hastily advanced to hold them in check, but men fell fast

in the British ranks. Three field-pieces, too, had been brought into play by the French, and for some time a galling and irregular fire was maintained, which severely tried the firmness of the English discipline. But not a shot was fired from the British lines, nor did a soldier move except to close up some gap in the ranks that had been made by bullet or grapeshot. Wolfe at this trying time was indefatigable. He seemed to be in all parts of the field at once, says an eye-witness, by word and example firing the men with that certainty of approaching triumph which lit up his own homely face. A captain at this moment was shot through the lungs. Wolfe came to him, pressed his hand, praised his services, told him not to give up hope, and not only assured him of early promotion, but found time to send off an aide-de-camp to Monkton to see that his wishes were carried out should he himself fall. It is not surprising that such a leader should have found men ready to follow him anywhere, and kindled a feeling of personal affection even beyond that commonly cherished by brave soldiers for a brave chief.

CHAPTER XII

VICTORY AND DEATH

By nine o'clock all the French troops that could be brought up from the lines at Beauport were forming in order of battle to the number of about five thousand. Not more than six hundred yards now separated the two armies, and Montcalm, mounted on a big black horse and sword in hand, could be seen riding to and fro among his men. In the centre, commanded by the chief himself, stood the regiments of Béarn and Guienne together with a body of Canadian militia. On the left was the regiment of Royal Rousillon with another of the colonial regulars. The regiments of La Sarre and Languedoc, with a battalion of the colonial troops and militia, were on the right, while of this latter force another two thousand co-operated with the army on either flank. The Indians, though they were in considerable strength upon the ground, seem to have taken little part in the action.

Bougainville, from his threatening but still somewhat remote position in the English rear, had in the meantime thrown forward a force of infantry and a body of three hundred and fifty cavalry (the only mounted soldiers in Canada) to attack Wolfe's rearguard. Townshend,

however, extending the Sixtieth, had repulsed them, and the French sharp-shooters had also now fallen back in line with their main army. The heavy skirmishing which preceded the final clash of arms had ceased, and Wolfe, who had taken up his position in front of the right wing with Monkton, perceived that at last the whole French army was in motion. Two cannon, which had with great difficulty been dragged up the cliff, were placed in position and opened fire, while the British troops, who for a short time had been lying down, now sprang to their feet and stood in lines three deep ready for the foe.

The sky was still gray, though the drizzling rain had ceased, when at a little before ten the French advanced to the attack. At about two hundred yards' distance they opened fire, advancing at the same time obliquely by the left of each formation, so that the punishment fell chiefly upon the British right. The militia, which were distributed throughout the French lines, caused some delay and no little confusion by throwing themselves down according to their backwoods custom to reload. But the strictest orders had been given that the English fire was to be reserved, and the men stood with shouldered arms as if on parade. The French bullets rained with increasing thickness upon the British lines, and above the rattle of the musketry the shouts of the advancing enemy rose louder and louder. Wolfe himself was shot through the wrist, but binding the wound rapidly up with his handkerchief, he hastened along the ranks, exhorting his men to reserve their fire. There was no need; the British infantry stood silent and motionless amid the rain of French bullets and the din of French cheers. It was not till they had received the

whole first discharge of the front rank of the enemy, not till they could see the whites of their eyes through the lifting clouds of smoke, that they poured in, at the word of command and at a distance of about thirty-five yards, one of the most tremendous and effective volleys that had ever been delivered in warfare since the invention of gunpowder.

The fire of nearly the whole of the three front ranks of the British army rang out, it was said, like a single cannon-shot. The French officers after the battle declared that they had never known anything like it. Every ball seemed to take effect. Major Knox, who was in the centre with the Forty-Third, declares enthusiastically that the best troops could not have withstood it, and that it had never been equalled off a drill-ground. As the smoke lifted, the French could be seen lying literally in heaps. The gaps in the ranks were wider than the struggling, swearing, shrieking bands of men that, paralysed by the shock of a discharge so withering, still kept their feet. Montcalm, who led his troops in person, was still untouched, and dashed hither and thither on his black horse through the shattered lines in vain endeavours to allay the panic that was already setting in. But a few minutes had elapsed since the French bugles had sounded the advance, not a British soldier had yet stirred, and Montcalm in effect was already beaten. The English had reloaded in the confusion, and Wolfe springing forward, sword in hand, at the head of his grenadiers gave the signal for the whole line to advance. Pouring in another volley they swept down with irresistible force upon the shattered foe. The sun just at this moment burst through the gray curtain that had for so long veiled

the skies, and lit up that half-mile of gleaming bayonets and flashing broadswords as it surged on over the wreck of the French vanguard towards the outworks of Quebec. The open plain was soon a mass of fugitives; here and there groups of white-coated regulars with the light-hearted, card-playing young aristocrats who lead them, offered a brave but brief resistance; most of the attacking column of the French, however, were in full flight for the city, not a mile away, and whatever checks or losses the victorious English now experienced came from some regiments of militia, who, throwing themselves into the covert on either side, maintained for some time a galling and effective fire.

Upon the English right Wolfe was pressing forward at the head of his grenadiers and the Twenty-Eighth regiment, with Colonel Fletcher and the Thirty-Fifth close behind him. What must have been the young commander's feelings at such a moment! What a reaction from weeks of suspense, from days and nights of despair! The weak western ramparts of Quebec were within a few hundred yards of him; the intervening space was covered with the beaten remnants of the enemy, driven onwards in headlong rout before the bayonets of the English infantry and the keen broadswords of the more nimble Highlanders. For the probable disgrace over which his sensitive nature had been so long brooding, a splendid triumph was now actually within his grasp. Wolfe had an almost exaggerated scorn of danger, so much so that even his military friends have left on record their dread of the consequences whenever he was called upon to take a conspicuous part in action. His wrist was shattered, but this he had probably for-

gotten; it seems likely that he was now singled out as a mark by the sharp-shooters in the woods. A bullet struck him at this moment in the groin, inflicting a wound that would of itself in all probability have proved mortal. He paid no heed to it, however, and pressed on at the head of his men. How long his indomitable will would have thus sustained him was not put to the test, for almost immediately another ball passed through his lungs. He staggered forward a few paces, struggling to keep his feet. Lieutenant Browne of the grenadiers was close at hand. "Support me," gasped Wolfe, "lest my gallant fellows should see me fall." The noble effort, however, was hopeless, and before Browne could reach him he sank to the ground. Mr. Henderson, a volunteer, and a private soldier who saw the General fall, rushed forward to his assistance, and these were followed a few moments later by an officer of artillery. It seems that in the heat and turmoil of the battle the fall of Wolfe was only witnessed by these four, who, lifting him in their arms, proceeded at once to carry him towards the rear, —but a little way, however, for the dying General soon asked to be laid upon the ground. He shook his head at the mention of a surgeon. "It is needless," he whispered; "it is all over with me," and immediately sank into a sort of stupor. "They run; see how they run!" cried out one of his attendants. "Who run?" murmured Wolfe, waking up as if out of sleep. "The enemy, sir; egad, they give way everywhere!" "Go, one of you, my lads," returned the dying man, "with all speed to Colonel Burton, and tell him to march Webb's regiment down to the St. Charles river and cut off the retreat of the fugitives to the bridge." Then turning on his side he

murmured, "God be praised, I now die in peace"; and in a few minutes, without apparent struggle or pain, the gallant soul had left the sickly and stricken frame.

For the moment we must leave the dead man and follow in the track of the victorious army, still unconscious of their leader's fate. An officer, however, had been at once despatched to Monkton with the news of the General's death, for on Monkton would now fall the chief command; but the senior brigadier was himself stretched upon the ground dangerously wounded, and Carleton had been knocked over by a blow on the head from a spent ball. Upon Townshend now fell the mantle of the dead chieftain, whom he alone of all the army had belittled; but Townshend was in some respects a good soldier, and his task for the moment was not a difficult one, for the victory was practically complete. It was in vain that the gallant Montcalm rode furiously from point to point making strenuous endeavours to rally his flying soldiers. He was soon himself borne along amid the impetuous rush of the fugitives, and as he neared the city a shot passed through his body. He kept his seat, however, and, supported by two soldiers, passed amid the thick of the hurrying throng through the St. Louis gate. Within the portals were gathered an anxious and trembling crowd of citizens. A girl, who lived to be a very old woman, used to relate to citizens of Quebec well-known to the present generation, how, standing with a group of women inside the gate, she saw Montcalm ride in with the blood flowing over his clothes. "*Oh, mon Dieu, mon Dieu!*" she shrieked, "the Marquis is shot!" "It's nothing, it's nothing," replied the gallant soldier; "don't trouble yourselves for me, my good friends."

The only effective resistance offered to the victorious English came from the fringe of thickets that lined the left of the battlefield. Here the Canadian riflemen clung obstinately to their ambuscade, and considerable numbers both of light infantry and Highlanders were shot down before they succeeded by repeated charges in clearing the woods. But the mass of the French army scarcely looked back till they reached the gates of the city—those, that is to say, who did reach them, for the plain was strewn with dead and wounded, and large numbers of prisoners were captured. Townshend now sounded the recall. Montcalm's army had vanished from the battlefield, and he remembered that Bougainville with a second corps was somewhere in his rear. The troops were halted and drawn up on the spot where the French lines had been marshalled in the gray of the morning. They had lost in killed and wounded between six and seven hundred men; the loss of the French was more than double. Bougainville did at last arrive, but only to find that Montcalm's army had been shattered, and his own path to Quebec barred by nearly four thousand British troops in order of battle and flushed with victory. He had therefore no choice but a precipitate retreat up the river. The beaten army in the meantime had been so hopelessly demoralised that the sheltering walls of Quebec were not sufficient to stay their flight. Though the pursuit had ceased, the narrow streets were thronged with fugitives making for the bridge of boats over the St. Charles. The farther side of the bridge was defended by a hornwork, and at this point of safety were soon collected a mass of huddling, shouting fugitives. Vaudreuil, for some reason no doubt of his own, had only just

appeared upon the scene, and the scene was one of ruin. Montcalm was dying; General Senezergues, the second in command, was also mortally wounded. There was no leader. Ramesay and his garrison of fifteen hundred men still held the city, but took no part in the operations outside its walls. French officers, usually so devoted and so brave, seemed in the confusion to lose their senses, and cried aloud for instant capitulation. What with the troops in Quebec itself, those that had been left in the lines at Beauport, and the beaten army, now chiefly collected around the bridge of boats, there must still have remained six or seven thousand men, while up the river, behind the English, was Bougainville with nearly three thousand more; and yet all was panic.

The martial record of Canada till that day had been one to be proud of; nor was she finally to submit till she had given proofs that her ancient heroism was not dead; but now the genius of her people and her soldiers seems to have been paralysed by the audacity of Wolfe and the valour and discipline of his men. The demoralisation to which the French in the hour of defeat are so peculiarly liable was never more conspicuous than upon this memorable day. A stormy council of war was held by Vaudreuil, in which it was decided to retreat to Jacques Cartier, thirty miles up the river, and leave Quebec and its small garrison to their fate. Accordingly, at nine o'clock on the night of the battle the entire French position from Montmorency to the St. Charles, with its guns, camp equipage, and effects, was hurriedly abandoned and the order given to march. "It was not a march," says Johnstone, who had to accompany it, "but an abominable flight, with such disorder

and confusion that, had the English known it, three hundred men sent after us would have been sufficient to cut our army in pieces. The soldiers were all mixed, scattered, dispersed, and running as hard as they could go as if the English army were at their heels."

Quebec was now left with a garrison of a thousand to fifteen hundred soldiers, sailors, and militia, two thousand six hundred women and children, a thousand invalids,—and short of rations.

Within the ruined city lay Montcalm. "How long have I to live?" he asked the surgeons when they pronounced the wound mortal. "Twelve hours, perhaps," was the reply. "So much the better," said the stricken general, "I shall not live to see the surrender of Quebec." He declared, according to Knox, that "since he had been beaten he was at least glad that it was by so brave an enemy." Ramesay, as governor of the city, came to him for orders. "I will neither give orders nor interfere any further; I have much business that must be attended to of greater moment than your ruined garrison and this wretched country. My time is short, therefore pray leave me. I wish you all comfort, and to be happily extricated from your present perplexities." Of his people, however, Montcalm was not forgetful, and before he expired sent the following note to Townshend: "Monsieur, the humanity of the English sets my mind at peace concerning the fate of the French prisoners and the Canadians. Feel towards them as they have caused me to feel. Do not let them perceive that they have changed masters. Be their protector as I have been their father." He died just before the dawn following his defeat. The confusion

was so great that no one could be found to make a coffin, and a rude box was fashioned from a few boards hastily nailed together. Within this the body was placed, and in the evening of the same day, followed by the officers of the garrison and many women and children, it was borne amid a mournful silence to the chapel of the Ursuline convent. Here a bursting shell had made a cavity in the floor; and into this fitting grave the remains of the gallant Montcalm were dropped amid the tears of a few nuns and a handful of desponding soldiers.

The grief of the English troops, when they realised that their beloved chief was dead, was deep and profound. "Our joy," wrote an officer, entirely unbiassed by either personal or professional connection with Wolfe, "at this success is inexpressibly damped by the loss we sustain of one of the greatest heroes which this or any other age can boast of." But there was not yet opportunity for either joy or grief to find much outward expression. Townshend's situation demanded prompt measures, and he at once began to intrench himself upon the Plains of Abraham. The path up the craggy steeps of the Anse du Foulon was widened, and stores, material, and cannon were carried up it without delay. On the 17th Admiral Saunders moved his ships into the basin and prepared to attack the lower town. By nightfall of the same day, in spite of some feeble firing from Quebec, one hundred and twenty British guns were ready to open on the city. Its position was hopeless, unless Levis from Montreal, with Bougainville and the shattered remnants of Montcalm's army could unite to relieve it. Governor Ramesay cynically remarked that if the French army would not face the British on the open plain, it

was not likely to attack them in the strong intrenchments that Townshend had already thrown up.

Before nightfall on the 17th a flag of truce appeared in the British lines. There was some haggling about the terms of surrender. Ramesay dreaded an assault, the militia of his garrison having declared they would not fight, for, since the army had deserted them, they were no longer soldiers; but he still looked for the relief which in a few days, or even a few hours, must come. Townshend declared that if his terms were not accepted by eleven o'clock the next morning, he would carry the place at the point of the bayonet, and Ramesay had no choice but to submit. The conditions were not rigorous, for the English knew their position was by no means a secure one. The French troops in the city were to march out with the honours of war, and to be taken to France; the inhabitants were to be protected in person and property, and in the free exercise of their religion.

In the afternoon of the 18th the grenadiers, at whose head Wolfe had fallen, marched into the city. They were preceded by a single gun, to whose carriage was affixed the royal standard of England. The capitulation was only just in time. A courier came riding in hot haste from Jacques Cartier to inform Ramesay that the reunited French army was in motion; but he was too late. From the highest point of the citadel, as the mighty rock-girt fortress grew dark and grim against the blush of the sunset sky, the flag of England was already flying.

The news of the capture of Quebec arrived in England only three days after Wolfe's last despatch, one so full

of anxiety and doubt. People were fearing the worst; even Pitt himself had begun to share the despondency of his general, who had despaired, says Walpole, "as much as a hero can despair," when the glorious news of victory came and sent the nation wild in its rebound of delirious joy. Bonfires flared on hill-top and market-place; bells pealed, cannons fired, addresses of congratulation poured in daily to the King. The dramatic nature of the scene, the scaling of a precipice in the middle of the night, the triumphant rush of the battle, the death of the victor in the moment of such a victory, the pathos, and yet the wonder and glory of the thing, stirred the feelings of the English nation beyond all precedent. And yet, in the great blare of triumph which shook the kingdom from end to end, it is surprising how deep, sincere, and far-reaching was the note of mourning which tempered it.

To the death of Nelson one turns instinctively for a parallel; but Nelson had swept the seas and filled the world with his name for years. Wolfe was a new man. In the army, and among those responsible for the army, it was known what manner of man he was; to the nation at large he was but a young general, whose deeds as a subordinate had given them every ground to hope that he would prove equal to greater responsibilities. His star had only just arisen. For a moment something like a cloud seemed to have obscured its very dawn; when, suddenly bursting like a meteor across the whole horizon of war and politics, it vanished amid a blaze of glory as splendid, in a sense, and as lasting as that of Nelson himself. It seemed, in truth, as if a great leader had been found and lost in a single moon.

As if, too, the whole picture were not at once sufficiently dramatic and pitiful, there was Wolfe's brave but unfortunate antagonist lying in his rude coffin under the ruins of the town he had so gallantly defended. No nation mourned for Montcalm. But far away in Languedoc the blow of domestic bereavement struck harder and wider than in the case of the young English soldier. If an ungrateful country looked coldly on, and even spoke cruel and unjust words, there was grief enough, we may be sure, in the chateau of Cardiac, where wife and mother, sons and daughters, tenants and servants mourned for the kindly master who was always first in their affections as they were in his. Montcalm's had indeed been a thankless and a wearisome task. Behind Wolfe was the enthusiasm of a nation and the sympathy of a sovereign. Montcalm had neither the one nor the other; yet, under conditions most disheartening, he failed not for a moment in his duty to his country and his King. If Wolfe was a hero, Montcalm was little short of one. The memory of the former was honoured by every observance that a grateful nation has it in its power to bestow. The latter had for his reward the calumnies of men who were not fit to tie his shoes, and whose lying tongues were loosened by the gallant death that closed the lips of their unfortunate commander.

Nor was it Old England alone that rejoiced and wept over the victory and death of Wolfe. New England gave rein in her own peculiar way to her exultation. The pulpits of Massachusetts and Connecticut resounded with triumph at the overthrow of the Amalekites, and the somewhat passive loyalty of the colonies blazed

into a momentary fervour of affection for their mother country and their King. Who indeed would then have thought that in twenty years they would be marching side by side with those Amalekites against the countrymen of Wolfe and Howe? There were, as a matter of fact, a good many Frenchmen who did think it, and have put it indelibly upon record,—Montcalm for one, as we know. But whatever opinions might have lurked in the minds of the more far-seeing of the English colonists, they were at least forgotten in the joy and triumph of the moment. The victory on the Plains of Abraham, though numerically insignificant, was in its results one of the greatest battles in the world's history. It not only gave Canada to England and established the permanent supremacy of the Anglo-Saxon race in North America, but it was there, in fact, and not at Yorktown, that the republic of the United States was founded.

Amherst had failed to reach the Canadian frontier before approaching winter put an end to his advance. Ten regiments, or most of Wolfe's army, were therefore left to garrison Quebec and hold it against the French, who were still in considerable force between Montreal and the neighbourhood of the captured city. How they held it against great odds, amid cold and hunger and decimating disease, is itself a stirring tale too little remembered, but not to be told here.

The fleet now prepared to sail for England. It was the 18th of October; they had delayed longer than they intended, and the breath of autumn had reddened as with flame the vast sea of rolling forest over which at

this season the eye may yet range with delight from the lofty heights of Quebec. The ramparts of the citadel and the battered wharves of the lower town were crowded with soldiers and spectators. The guns of the city were once more booming, but this time in solemn and measured fashion, unlike the angry uproar of war. A line-of-battle ship, with sails set and flags flying at half-mast, was gliding slowly down the river. Men and women, French and English, side by side, stood gazing at it till with a favouring breeze it vanished seaward behind the woods of the Isle of Orleans. It was the *Royal William*, and on board of her, coffined and embalmed, lay all that was mortal of the conqueror of Quebec.

It was on the 16th of November that the *Royal William* cast anchor at Spithead. At seven o'clock next morning, amid the firing of minute guns from the fleet, the body was lowered into a twelve-oared barge, and at the head of a long procession of boats, towed slowly to the shore. At Portsmouth it was placed in a hearse, and escorted through the town by the aides-de-camp, Captains Smith and Bell, in a mourning coach. The garrison with arms reversed, and large crowds of people, followed the coffin in slow procession through the streets. Muffled peals were rung from the church towers, and minute guns fired by the artillery. From Portsmouth Wolfe's remains were carried to Greenwich, where they were placed beside his father's in the family vault of the parish church.

The national memorial in Westminster Abbey was not unveiled till 1773. Ten years before that a lofty column had been erected to his memory by Lord Temple

at Stowe. Besides the cenotaph at Squerryes, mentioned in the first chapter of this book, a large tablet may be seen over the door of Westerham church, placed there by Wolfe's old friends and neighbours in the year after his death. An obelisk upon the Plains of Abraham marks the spot upon which he fell; but of all such tributes to his memory, the one which surely strikes the most stirring note is the stately column on the heights of Quebec which he shares with his gallant but vanquished foe. For here Frenchmen and Englishmen have combined to honour the memory of the two illustrious chiefs by whose blood the prosperity of their common country was established.

It is idle to speculate on Wolfe's exact position among famous generals. Circumstances have placed him apart and alone. He had but just risen to high command when he fell; and yet the very nature of his death is apt to leave an impression, when the achievement it crowned is taken by itself, that hardly does him in one sense full justice. The immense loss he was to the country is almost forgotten in the triumph of his death. To speak of Wolfe merely as a promising leader cut off in his prime would be altogether too trite and too conventional. The promise with him had been already fulfilled, for in every branch of a soldier's duty, in peace and in war, he had shown the highest capacity. To every emergency, and these had been many, he had proved himself equal. Quick as lightning to see an opportunity in action, he was equally rapid in forming his plans and vigorous in carrying them into execution. With this he combined a thorough grasp of detail, and a careful attention

to all the small but important matters vital to successful warfare, that mark the born soldier. At the head of a charge, or amid the tumult of a battery, no man was ever more in his element; yet so far from despising, like most English officers of his day, the studious and theoretical branch of his business, his reading was so extensive that he was universally regarded as a high authority on military education and military literature.

Turning from the soldier to the man, the frank and ingenuous confessions he makes of his own most venial shortcomings lend a warm humanity to a character which his contemporaries in their enthusiasm called perfect. He is hot-tempered, he declares; with his red hair and his fiery spirit, who would expect or wish him to be otherwise? He laments sometimes that he is irritable; if so, his irritability seems never to have cost him a friend. He rapped out an oath occasionally, no doubt, but as seldom as he can help, he confides to his father with some naïveté, as in such a profane army the least he could do was to set a good example. He was both sociable and temperately convivial, as we know. His religious convictions were strong and deep; but he did not wear his heart upon his sleeve, and he set an example to his regiment by a wholesome and manly life which was better than many sermons. There was in him no particle of vulgar conceit, though he had an honest confidence in himself which was admirable, because it was always more than justified. He was ambitious, certainly; but it was with a lofty ambition that would have scorned place or fame that was not fairly won, and was coupled with a love of his profession and of his country that was as sincere as it was enthusiastic. A